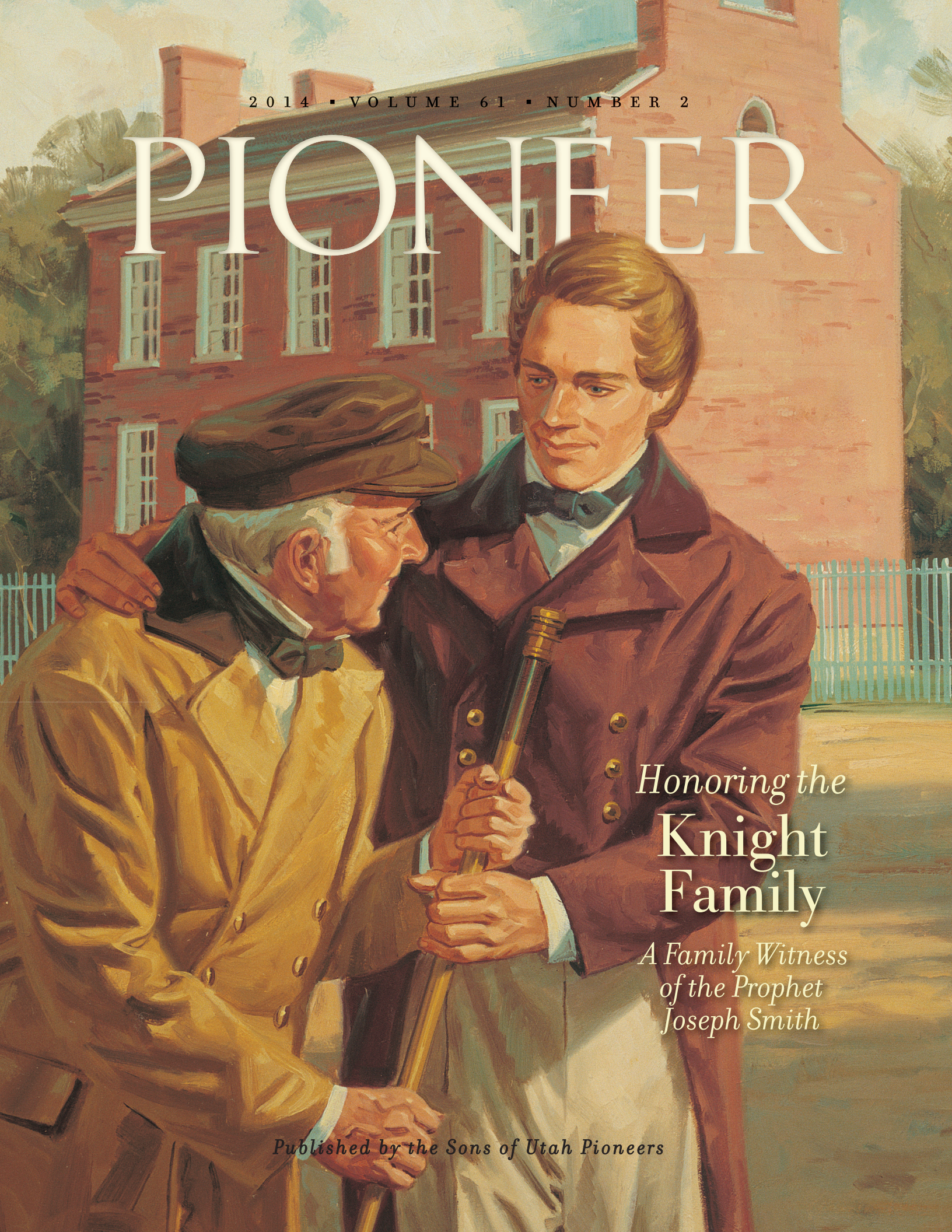




2014 ■ VOLUME 61 ■ NUMBER 2

PIONEER

Honoring the Knight Family

*A Family Witness
of the Prophet
Joseph Smith*

Published by the Sons of Utah Pioneers

PIONEER

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BY ROBERT C. FOLKMAN



The
 Prophet
 Brigham
 Young often
 tried to teach
 the Latter-day
 Saints about
 temporal

matters when he spoke to them from the pulpit. He recognized that the practical matters of life gave many of the Saints trouble, and those difficulties affected their spiritual lives as well. Providing shelter, food, and employment for the growing number of people in Great Salt Lake City and the surrounding territory was always on his mind.

Early in the settlement of Utah, he counseled those few who came to the territory with a little money: "Let him go and make a great farm, and stock it well. . . . What for? Why for the purpose of spending his money. Then let him cut it up into fields, and adorn it with trees, and build a fine house upon it. What for? Why for the purpose of spending his money. The money, thus spent, with a wise and prudent hand, is in a situation to increase a hundred-fold. . . . He can then commence and build a woolen factory, for instance; he can send and buy sheep and have them brought here, and herd them here, and shear them here . . . and thus employ hundreds and thousands of the brethren and sisters who have come from the old country, who have not been accustomed to dig

in the earth for their livelihood" (*Journal of Discourses* 1:253).

In a later speech he again explained how the proper use of money would benefit the whole community: "Let me refer the whole of you to a circumstance in Winter Quarters. . . . How did you live there? Do you know how you got anything to eat? Brethren came to me saying, 'We must go to Missouri . . . and get work.' Do you know to this day how you lived? I will tell you. . . . I had not five dollars to start with; but I went to work and built a mill, which I knew we should want only for a few months, that cost \$3,600. I gave notice that I would employ every man and pay him for his labor. . . . If I had sixpence, I turned it into 25 cents. . . . How did I do that? By faith. I went to Brother Neff, who had just come in the place, and asked him for and received \$2,600, though he did not know where the money was going. He kept the mill for another year, and it died on his hands. I say, God bless him forever! For it was the money he brought from Pennsylvania that preserved thousands of men, women, and children from starving" (JD 6:173).

Some may read that story and think, "Poor Brother Neff. He must have been impoverished by his generosity." Well, not so. Before leaving for Utah, Brigham transferred ownership of the mill to John Neff in return for the \$2,600. The money was used to pay Young's debts on the mill and to

outfit the first companies of Saints to continue west in 1847. John and his family profitably operated the mill for another season and then brought the stones and machinery to Utah, where they built a successful flour mill, a lumber mill, and a shingle mill, among other industries. Just as the Saints at Winter Quarters were saved and prospered by the use of the Neff money, so also did John Neff and his family continue to prosper and provide employment and goods to the settlements in Utah.

"The financier is he that brings the lumber from the canyons and shapes it for the use of his fellow man, employing mechanics and laborers to produce, from the elements and crude material, everything necessary for the sustenance and comfort of man; . . . and thus give employment to men, women and children, . . . bringing the elements into successful use for the benefit of man, and reclaiming a barren wilderness" (JD 19:97).

The story of the Knight family, retold in this issue, is a story of faithful pioneer men and women who effectively used the resources at their disposal for the benefit of their fellow Saints. Jesse Knight in particular (see p. 29) heard Brigham Young's sermons, believed them, and acted on them. Much of "Uncle" Jesse's life is a classic application of Brigham Young's frontier economics, and his is one of the many stories of pioneer spirit and values that built the territory and the state of Utah. 🏠

A Family Witness

of Joseph Smith

BY WILLIAM G. HARTLEY *Associate BYU History professor emeritus*

Joseph Knight Sr.

was born in Massachusetts in 1772 and came to Colesville, New York, via Vermont. He and his wife, Polly Peck, both had a namesake child among their seven. The oldest son was Nahum, then came Esther, Newel, Anna, Joseph Jr., little Polly, and Elizabeth.

In 1826, the Knight family never suspected what tremendous effect the unmarried young man from Palmyra, whom they had just hired, would have on their lives. They employed Joseph Smith Jr. to help them mill and farm. But instead of being just their employee, he soon became their religious leader and guide. From their first acquaintance with him until his martyrdom less than two decades later, they were his followers, as loyal as any who converted during his lifetime. Through fourteen years of Joseph Smith's public ministry, he and the Knights were trusted friends and co-workers in the cause of the Restoration.

The Family as Witnesses

By the mouth of witnesses, the scriptures explain, the truth of God's word will be established. Several people became official witnesses of Joseph Smith's prophetic mission: the Smith family, the Three Witnesses, and the Eight Witnesses. Less spectacular, less official, less well-known, the Joseph Knight family became a special type of witness—a family witness—of Joseph Smith's work as prophet and restorer. The Knights believed him before David Whitmer or Oliver Cowdery ever heard of him and before Martin Harris believed. And the Knights stood by Joseph longer and more firmly than most of the official witnesses did.

Knight Colesville, New York, farm site photo by Kenneth R. Mays. Joseph Smith artwork by Liz Lemon Swindle.



*“Joseph Knight, Sen. . . .
has been faithful and true,
and even-handed and ex-
emplary, and virtuous and
kind, never deviating to the
right hand or the left. . . .
this man was a faithful man
in Israel; therefore his name
shall never be forgotten.”*

—Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*,
Vol. 5, ch. 6, p. 124

The Knight family circle knew Joseph in the earliest days, when he was accused of gold-digging and using peep stones. But that did not cause them to lose their regard for him. When Joseph was tried in court on charges of defrauding people by treasure digging, Father Knight twice arranged for local attorneys to defend him. If Joseph Smith were a charlatan or disreputable money grubber, as his detractors charged, the large Knight family would have known it and would not have felt such trust in him. Their devotion to him, which was based on firsthand knowledge, stands today as a substantial witness of his good character.

The Knights helped Joseph Smith give the world the Book of Mormon. They provided food for Joseph and Emma while Joseph translated the gold plates. Parts of the original Book of Mormon manuscript were penned on foolscap paper the Knights brought to Joseph. Father Knight's wagon carried the gold plates from the Hill Cumorah.

The Knight and Smith families knew each other well. Father Knight stayed at the Smith's Manchester home. Joseph Smith was often a guest in Knight homes in Colesville, New York, and in Missouri. Hyrum, the Prophet's brother, boarded with Newel and Sally (Newel's first wife, who died in Missouri) at Colesville. In Kirtland, Newel and Lydia boarded separately with Hyrum and Jerusha, who hosted Newel and Lydia's wedding. Joseph Smith performed that wedding. Joseph Smith preached Polly Knight's funeral sermon. Father Smith, the Church patriarch, gave several Knights their patriarchal blessings. Joseph Smith's history records his joy when his path crossed those of Father Knight or his children, whom he calls his choice friends. Newel Knight's journals are full of expressions of love and admiration whenever he encountered Joseph Smith.

The Knights helped by providing food for Joseph and Emma while Joseph translated the gold plates.

Three Tests of Loyalty

The Knights passed through at least three trials that tested their loyalty to the Prophet. The first test centered on the Kirtland-Missouri difficulties, when major differences about Church economic policies and leadership questions caused the Whitmers and the Cowderys to lose confidence in Joseph Smith. The second came in Nauvoo, when the young Prophet introduced several "higher doctrines," including temple ceremonies and plural marriage, which alienated such important figures as First Presidency members Sidney Rigdon and William Law. The third test came after Joseph Smith's martyrdom, when the Saints were

Artwork by Paul Mann



asked to transfer their loyalties to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Brigham Young. This was something Nauvoo Stake President William Marks and several in the Smith family were unwilling to do. The large Knight family network survived these three tests remarkably well.

What of the Missouri persecutions? Sacrifices of lives and properties during the Missouri years did not shake their faith in Joseph Smith and the Restoration. They were forced from Jackson County by hostile citizenry in winter, and they were later pushed out of Clay County. State militia expelled them from Missouri altogether, a wintertime move again, in 1838–39. Family members suffered a combined loss of perhaps \$20,000-worth of land and property in Missouri (more than a quarter of a million dollars today). They buried six loved ones in Missouri. Despite the spiritual and mental anguish suffered during the eight years in Missouri, with three exceptions, they did not forsake their faith.

What of temple ceremonies and plural marriage? In Nauvoo, the family performed baptisms for the dead for their deceased relatives. In the Nauvoo Temple they received endowments and sealings in eternal marriages. The families of four of Father and Polly Knight's children entered polygamy: Newel's widow, Lydia; Anna DeMille; Joseph Knight Jr., and Elizabeth Knight Johnson. The families of two of his four stepchildren accepted polygamy: Hosea Stout (widower of stepdaughter Samantha Peck) and Sarah Jane and husband, Charles C. Rich. Also, Father Knight's sister, Molly Knight Slade, became a plural wife.

What of the leadership succession question after Joseph Smith's death? The Knights voted with their voices, their resources, their feet, and their wagons for the Twelve and Brigham Young as Joseph Smith's proper successors. Of Father Knight's children and their spouses, all who were living in Nauvoo as adults followed Brigham Young west. Most Nauvoo high council members supported Brigham Young, including Newel Knight, the most experienced stake officer then serving.

Contributors to the Restoration

None of the Knights became apostles or seventies or stake presidents. None were chosen to be

among the Three Witnesses or the Eight Witnesses of the gold plates. No Knights marched with Joseph Smith in Zion's Camp. The only proselytizing missionary the family produced during the Joseph Smith period was Newel, who preached during his journey to Kirtland in 1834–35. Yet Knight family members, individually and in groups or families, helped Joseph Smith and the cause of the Restoration in less spectacular ways. They participated in most of the key events that launched the Restoration. Some of them helped Joseph Smith bring forth the Book of Mormon. Some were at the Whitmer farm the day the Church was organized. Six helped to lay the first log in beginning the building of Zion in Jackson County. Family members helped build the Kirtland and Nauvoo Temples.

The family's most important proselytizing work was within their own family. Father Knight, Newel, and Joseph Jr. helped to convert more than sixty souls in their extended families: Knights, Culvers, Pecks, Coburns, Stringhams, DeMilles, and Slades. Then, when children and grandchildren came along, a clan of Knight-related believers added numbers and strength to the young Church. They gave the Church its first organized congregation, the Colesville Branch. Almost all of the sixty-plus members of the branch were related. By staying together during moves to Ohio and Missouri, the Colesville Branch—the Knight family—provided the Church a functioning unit of some permanence. When the first high priests were called, Newel Knight was among them. When the first stake was created in Missouri, Newel served in it as high councilor and branch president, Hezekiah Peck was one of the stake's first priests, and Ezekiel Peck one of its first teachers. Hezekiah Peck became a Nauvoo bishop and was a bishop during one stage of the trek west. Joseph Knight Jr. was ordained a bishop in Kanesville. Newel served on four high councils during twelve consecutive years. Several of the families' women were charter members in the Nauvoo Relief Society.

The first person in the Church to die in the cause of establishing Zion in Jackson County was Mother Polly Peck Knight. And Sally Knight, Newel's first wife, died in Clay County due to exposure

caused by persecutions. Some Knight relatives died “before their time” in Nauvoo.

Newel, a Nauvoo exile, died in upper Nebraska from wilderness hardships forced upon him because of his loyalty to the religious cause through terrible times. Father Knight died four months after being driven from Nauvoo by anti-Mormon vigilantes in September 1846. From the Church’s second year until the martyrdom, the family lost some of its best blood for the sake of the gathering.

Various Knight relatives helped pioneer no fewer than ten Latter-day Saint settlements during seven major moves: Thompson in Ohio; Independence, Clay, and Far West settlements in Missouri; Nauvoo

Newel Knight, son of Joseph Knight . . .

and I had many serious conversations on the important subject of man’s eternal salvation; we had got into the habit of praying much at our meetings and Newel had said he would try and take up his cross, and pray vocally during meeting; but when we again met together he rather excused himself. [Newel] made several attempts to pray, but could scarcely do so, feeling that he had not done his duty, but that he should have prayed in the presence of others. He began to feel uneasy, and continued to feel worse both in mind and body, until upon reaching his own house, his appearance was such as to alarm his wife very much. He requested her to go and bring me to him.

“I went, and found him suffering very much in his mind, and his body acted upon in a very strange manner. His visage and limbs were distorted and twisted in every shape and appearance possible to imagine; and finally he was caught up off the floor of the apartment and tossed about most fearfully. His situation was soon made know to his neighbors and relatives, and in a short time as many as eight or nine grown persons had got together to witness the scene. After he had thus suffered for a time, I succeeded in getting hold of him by the hand, when almost immediately he spoke to me, and with great earnestness requested of me, that I should cast the devil out of him, saying that he knew he was in him, and that he also knew that I could cast him out. I replied, if you know that I can, it shall be done, and then almost unconsciously I rebuked the devil, and



Artwork by Paul Mann

commanded him in the name of Jesus Christ to depart from him; when immediately Newel spoke out and said that he could see the devil leave him and vanish from his sight. This was the first miracle which has been done in this Church, or by any member of it, and it was done by God, and by the power of godliness; therefore let the honor and the praise, the dominion and the glory, be ascribed to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, forever and ever, Amen.

“The scene was now entirely changed, for as soon as the devil had departed from our friend, his countenance became natural, his distortion of body ceased, and almost immediately the Spirit of God descended upon him, and the visions of eternity were opened to his view. . . . As soon as consciousness returned, his bodily weakness was such that we were obliged to lay him upon his bed and wait upon him for some time.” ▮

From Joseph Smith’s history.

in Illinois; Garden Grove, Mt. Pisgah, and Kanesville in Iowa; and Winter Quarters and Ponca in Nebraska. Father Knight, Newel, and Joseph Jr. built about a dozen mills to help their fellow settlers.

The first marriage Joseph Smith performed in this dispensation by priesthood rather than by state authority was the marriage of Newel and Lydia Knight.

Several family members witnessed divine manifestations. The first miracle in the Church came when the Prophet Joseph Smith cast evil spirits out of Newel Knight. At a June 1830 conference, Newel beheld a vision of the Father and the Son. He and Lydia witnessed the gift of tongues and of heavenly fire during the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. Lydia and a DeMille child both saw the Holy Ghost imbue people with radiating light. Through faith in priesthood power and a handkerchief blessed by Joseph Smith, Lydia was healed. By insisting that elders give her child a blessing by the power of the priesthood, she demonstrated her faith in patriarch Joseph Smith Sr.'s promise that she would lose no children to death. Newel healed Philo Dibble, Aunt Electa Peck, and Aunt Patty Peck twice. Joseph Knight Jr. healed John Harris. After Newel died, he visited Lydia twice to comfort and strengthen her.

Only a few early converts were privileged to be the subjects of revelations that Joseph Smith received. But the Knight kin, as individuals and as the Colesville Branch, received divine attention in several revelations. Altogether, in more than a dozen revelations the Lord singled out the Knights and their circumstances.

The Joseph Knight Sr. family has made a valuable contribution to Latter-day Saint literature. Newel Knight's autobiography appeared in *Scraps of Biography*, which the Church published in the 1880s. Lydia's story, written with Susa Young Gates and Amelia Young for the "Noble Women's Lives" series, was published as *Lydia Knight's History* in 1883. Father Knight's history, penned apparently in the last half of the 1830s, was published in 1976 in *BYU Studies*. Newel's voluminous personal journals are in the Church Archives and offer one of the finest firsthand accounts of Mormonism's beginnings. Joseph Knight Jr.'s "Incidents of History," although brief, gives important details about

early Church history; it has been published. The writings of Father Knight, Lydia, Newel, and Joseph Jr. give not only history, but also four written witnesses of Joseph Smith. Each revered him.

Freeborn and Anna Knight DeMille's Defense of the Faith

From Manti, Utah, Freeborn and Anna Knight DeMille had written to Freeborn's brother Isaac and his wife, Sarah DeMille, in Saline, New York, urging them to investigate Mormon-

ism and to come west. Isaac DeMille answered, writing a letter critical of Mormonism, dated December 27, 1857. Freeborn and Anna answered Isaac's letter politely but with firm convictions. Their answer is dated June 29, 1858. In it they invited Isaac and Sarah to come west to escape a coming famine and war. In reply, Isaac and Sarah shared perceptions of Mormonism common to non-LDS people living in the East. They wondered how Freeborn and Anna could embrace a religion made disreputable by polygamy, avenging Danites, murders of emigrants, acts of treason and rebellion, and strange twists to biblical teachings.

In his answer, Freeborn, speaking for himself and Anna, calmly offered explanations. "I think you judge me very hard although I am not offended," Freeborn wrote. "You have condemned things you know nothing about." He reaffirmed what he had said previously, that "we as a people are the happiest people in the world, . . . we have been mobbed and robbed enough to stand in our own defense, now," referring to threats then posed by Johnston's Army, newly arrived in Utah Territory.

Isaac accused Freeborn of being deceived by Joseph Smith. Freeborn countered by reminding Isaac of firsthand contacts he (Freeborn) and Anna had had with the Prophet from the early New York days forward, so that their personal knowledge about Joseph Smith should merit more consideration than any anti-Mormon materials Isaac and Sarah were reading. "As for Joseph Smith being



a Prophet it makes no difference whether or not you believe it,” Freeborn said. “We hear the same stories you tell about and a great many more about as foolish. Years ago we were acquainted with him in Broome County before he got the plates and afterward and know all about it.”

Isaac’s criticism that Mormons were guilty of rebellion against the government caused Freeborn to dig in his heels: “I would like to show you who has rebelled against the government; but it would take me all summer to write all I know about it. This people has been driven five times from their homes and their property by mob violence in violation of the laws of God and the laws of Humanity and the laws of the United States. Now just look at it, who rebelled against the government and who took the spoil?”

“You speak of a dark mystery,” Freeborn concluded. “There is no dark mystery in Mormonism. It is all light and truth, eternal truth.”

A Promised Posterity

Joseph Smith Sr., the Church patriarch, promised Newel and Lydia Knight several blessings, including a large posterity. To Newel, after losing his first wife, Sally, and one child, patriarch Joseph Smith Sr. promised that he should “yet raise up children” and “that thy name may not be blotted out from among men.” To Lydia Knight, who had lost her only two children before she married Newel, Patriarch Smith promised she would be a mother “of many children” and would “have power to keep them from the power of the destroyer, and thy heart shall not be pained because of the loss of thy children, for the Lord shall watch over them and keep them.” On several occasions, she exercised faith in that promise, thereby driving death from her children. The promise held, and Lydia raised eight children—the children promised to Newel—to adulthood. A large posterity came to her—eighty descendants during her lifetime alone.

In the early 1980s, the Mormon Pioneer Genealogy Society published a ranking of one hundred pioneer families with the largest number of descendants who submitted four-generation family group records to the LDS Genealogical Society. The Joseph Knight-Polly Peck family ranked fourteenth

largest on that list—one place ahead of the prolific Brigham Young family.

Promise of Necessities of Life

Father Joseph Knight’s generosity towards Joseph Smith, which helped bring forth the Book of Mormon, did not go unrewarded. The Prophet promised him that the Knights would never want for necessities. As part of the fulfillment of this promise, the Prophet arranged for Father Knight to be given a residential lot and house in Nauvoo. Joseph Knight Jr.’s patriarchal blessing promised temporal comfort to him and “the blessings shall extend to thy children, and thy children’s children, from generation to generation.” Father Knight also gave Joseph Knight Jr. a blessing that promised that “thou shall be blessed with all the blessings for the comfort of life.” Lydia Knight was promised “blessings of the earth and all things which thou needest for thy comfort.” Family tradition asserts that the promise extends to any of Father Knight’s descendants who remained faithful, that they would never want for the necessities of life, although prosperity would not come without work or worry or periods of hard times.

Lydia Knight’s life after Newel’s death is filled with occasions when, by exercising faith and determination, she was provided for without asking or was sent needed food or cattle feed—and even a cabin near Winter Quarters in 1847. Joseph Jr.’s son Miland became one of four top cattlemen in Utah. He set up an integrated meat company that bred cattle, owned cattle herds and ranches, slaughtered and packed meat, and sold it wholesale. Becoming very successful, he put his wealth into a new plant, but fire destroyed it while it was uninsured, and his wealth dissolved overnight. Some descendants believe Miland’s success would have continued had he desired to use his wealth to help the Lord’s kingdom. By the time he died, Miland had property enough to sustain his widow for the rest of her life but nothing more. Taking center stage during any discussions of prosperity among the Knight offspring is Jesse Knight, Newel and Lydia’s son, whose wealth and philanthropy have become legendary in Utah and LDS history (*see page 29*).

Family Legacy of Belief

There are critics of Joseph Smith, many of them respectable and honorable people, who question his truthfulness and claims to receive revelations from God. Amid historical debates and religious discussions, the simple but solid Knight family network, who remained loyal to the Prophet longer than anyone but the Smith family, ought not to be ignored. They bear a quiet but adamant witness that their friend Joseph Smith was what he claimed to be.

Fulfillment of Joseph Smith's Prediction

In January 1842, Joseph Smith privately wrote his tribute to Father Knight and his loyal family

and then prophesied something which has come to pass. "It shall be said of him by the sons of Zion, while there is one of them remaining," the Prophet said of Father Knight, "that this man, was a faithful man in Israel." Because of Father Knight's faithfulness, Joseph additionally promised that "his name shall never be forgotten." His numerous posterity now living, the histories written by Father Knight, Newel, Lydia, and Joseph Knight Jr., and books and articles by historians help fulfill that promise one friend made to another so many years ago. ▼

Excerpts from William G. Hartley. Stand By My Servant Joseph: Story of the Joseph Knight Family (Deseret Book, 2004).



Joseph Smith spotted his dear friend, Father Knight, hobbling down a Nauvoo street. Father Knight, an elderly man in his seventies, had been the prophet's friend for almost 20 years. Joseph stepped up to him, put his arm around him, pressed his elderly friend's gnarled fingers onto the top of his cane, and said, "Brother Knight, you need this cane more than I do." The prophet told Father Knight to keep the cane as long as he needed it, and then to pass it on to Knight descendants with the first name of Joseph.

Joseph Knight Sr.'s cane was presented to the Church History Library on May 29, 2009. Elder Marlin K. Jensen of the Seventy (former Church Historian and Recorder) received the cane from Jim Knight of Arizona, a spokesman for the Knight family descendants.



Nearly 100 Knight descendants were in attendance. ▼

See <http://www.josephknightfamily.org/news/cane.html>

Pictured left to right, descendants who inherited the cane Joseph Robert, Joseph Adair, Joseph Byron, and Joseph Knight.

Artwork by Paul Mann. See photo at josephknightfamily.org

**Tribute
to the
Knight
family
by the
Prophet
Joseph
Smith**

*found
in History of the
Church of
Jesus Christ
of Latter-Day
Saints. Period I.
History of
Joseph Smith,
the Prophet
by himself
(Deseret News,
Salt Lake City,
1909) Vol. 5,
ch. 6, 124–125.*

cuted innocently; and finally called for all those who were willing to support and uphold Joseph, and who believed that he was doing his duty and was innocent of the charges alleged against him by our enemies, to hold up their right hands; when almost every hand was raised and no opposite vote was called for.

The meeting was productive of great good by inspiring the Saints with new zeal and courage, and weakening the hands and hearts of the treacherous, and of evil and designing persons disposed to secret combinations against the truth. Elder Rigdon visited Brother Hyrum in the course of the day, and manifested a determination to arouse his energies in defense of the truth.

Effect of
the Meet-
ing.

Tuesday, 22.—I find my feelings of the 16th inst. towards my friends revived,* while I contemplate the virtues and the good qualities and characteristics of the faithful few, which I am now recording in the Book of the Law of the Lord,—of such as have stood by me in every hour of peril, for these fifteen long years past,—say, for instance, my aged and beloved brother, Joseph Knight, Sen., who was among the number of the first to administer to my necessities, while I was laboring in the commencement of the bringing forth of the work of the Lord, and of laying the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For fifteen years he has been faithful and true, and even-handed and exemplary, and virtuous and kind, never deviating to the right hand or to the left. Behold he is a righteous man, may God Almighty lengthen out the old man's days; and may his trembling, tortured, and broken body be renewed, and in the vigor of health turn upon him, if it be Thy will, consistently, O God; and it shall be said of him, by the sons of Zion, while there is one of them re-

The Prophet's
Blessing on
Joseph
Knight, Sen.

* See closing pages of chapter V.

maining, that this man was a faithful man in Israel; therefore his name shall never be forgotten.

There are his sons, Newel Knight and Joseph Knight, Jun., whose names I record in the Book of the Law of the Lord with unspeakable delight, for they are my friends.

Newel Knight
and Joseph
Knight, Jun.,
the Prophet's
Friends.

There is a numerous host of faithful souls, whose names I could wish to record in the Book of the Law of the Lord; but time and chance would fail. I will mention, therefore, only a few of them as emblematical of those who are too numerous to be written. But there is one man I would mention, namely Orrin Porter Rockwell, who is now a fellow-wanderer with myself, an exile from his home, because of the murderous deeds, and infernal, fiendish dispositions of the indefatigable and unrelenting hand of the Missourians. He is an innocent and a noble boy. May God Almighty deliver him from the hands of his pursuers. He was an innocent and a noble child and my soul loves him. Let this be recorded for ever and ever. Let the blessings of salvation and honor be his portion.

The Prophet's
Feelings To-
wards Orrin
Porter Rock-
well.

But, as I said before, so say I again, while I remember the faithful few who are now living, I would remember also the faithful of my friends who are dead, for they are many; and many are the acts of kindness—paternal and brotherly kindnesses—which they have bestowed upon me; and since I have been hunted by the Missourians, many are the scenes which have been called to my mind. I have remembered scenes of my childhood. I have thought of my father who is dead, who died by disease which was brought upon him through suffering by the hands of ruthless mobs. He was a great and a good man. The envy of knaves and fools was heaped upon him, and this was his lot and portion all the days of his life. He was of noble stature and possessed a high, and holy, and exalted, and virtuous mind. His soul soared above all those mean and groveling prin-

The Prophet's
Testimony of
his Father.

The Colesville Branch

the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon

BY LARRY C. PORTER

Excerpt from BYU Studies 10, no. 3 (1970)

With the many branch, ward, and stake organizations which currently bedeck the international scene of Mormonism, it is understandable that the activities of a small branch of Saints at Colesville, Broome County, New York, could have been virtually forgotten with the passage of time. Yet, at the close of 1830, it was one of some five principal branches serving as focal points for the gathering of the faithful in the new Church. Fayette, Seneca County, New York, served as the headquarters of the Church, while other branches existed at Colesville; Kirtland, and Mentor, Geauga County, Ohio; and Warrensville, Cayahoga County, Ohio.¹ The Colesville Branch was personally inaugurated by the Prophet Joseph Smith, and its membership played a significant role in the initial years of the new dispensation. Drawn by Joseph's affirmation of communication with the heavens and the supportive evidences contained in the Book of Mormon, the Colesville Saints gave impetus to the missionary zeal of the Restoration and provided elements of needed leadership for the rapidly expanding faith.

Joseph Smith worked as a laborer for Josiah Stowell and Joseph Knight Sr. The Knight home was situated on the south side (also referred to as the "east" side) of the Susquehanna River, opposite the



Knight's grist-mill and carding mill were built near the outlet of Pickerel Pond (above).

Pickerel Pond photo at ldshistorysites.com



Home of the Colesville Branch and Joseph Knight Sr.'s farm site

village of Nineveh, near the "Colesville Bridge," Colesville Township, New York.² Mr. Knight operated a farm, a gristmill, and a carding machine.³

In his journal, Newel Knight, the second son of Joseph Knight, recorded: "The business in which my father was engaged often required him to have hired help, and among the many from time to time employed was a young man by the name of Joseph Smith, Jun., to whom I was particularly attached. His noble deportment, his faithfulness and his kind address, could not fail

to win the esteem of those who had the pleasure of his acquaintance. . . . This chosen instrument told us of God's manifestations to him, of the discovery and receiving of the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, of his persecutions for the gospel's sake, and many other items of his eventful life."⁴

Joseph Knight Jr. gave an expanded picture of his father's holdings and the family's acquaintance with Joseph and the "gold book": "My father moved to Chenango co., York State in December 1808. In a few years [June 24, 1811] he bought a farm on the

Susquehanna river, in Broome co., 20 miles above the great bend, built a grist mill and two carding machines. I was raised to work in them. My father bought three other farms and hired many hands; in [1826] he hired Joseph Smith; Joseph and I worked and slept together. My Father said Joseph was the best hand he ever hired, we found him a boy of truth, he was about 21 years of age. I think it was in November he made known to my father and I, that he had seen a vision, that a personage had appeared to him and told him where

there was a gold book of ancient date buried and if he would follow the directions of the angel he would get it. We were told it in secret; I being the youngest son, my two elder brothers [Nahum and Newel] did not believe in such things; my Father and I believed what he told us.”⁵

The extent to which Joseph’s close friends and confidants had prior knowledge of the time appointed for his securing the “Golden Plates” as being September 22, 1827, is rather obscure, but it seems obvious that both Knight and Stowell journeyed to Manchester about that time with a decided purpose in mind: “So far at least was the elder Knight taken into the Prophet’s confidence that he purposely so arranged his affairs as to be at the Smith residence, near Manchester, at the time the plates of the Book of Mormon were given into Joseph’s possession.”⁶

In her account, Lucy Mack Smith states that it was Mr. Knight’s horse and wagon that were used to transport the plates from the Hill Cumorah to their initial hiding place in the birch log, and some two days later, it was Joseph Knight Sr. and Josiah Stowell who were among those summoned to go in search of the three ruffians who beset Joseph when he retrieved the plates from an endangered situation.⁷

In early June 1829, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery moved to the Peter Whitmer Sr. home in Fayette, New York, at his invitation. Here the translation was completed, the Witnesses called, and by March 26, 1830, the Book of Mormon made available to the public.⁸ On April 6, 1830, “The Church of Jesus Christ” was organized in the Whitmers’ log home at Fayette. In that same month Joseph Smith made a special visit to the home of Joseph Knight Sr. at Colesville, in a missionary endeavor: “Mr. Knight and his family were Universalists, but were willing to reason with me upon my religious views, and were as usual friendly and hospitable. We held several meetings in the neighborhood; we had many friends, and some enemies. Our meetings were well attended, and many began to pray vocally to Almighty God, that He would give them wisdom to understand the truth. Amongst those

“The business in which my father was engaged often required him to have hired help, and among the many from time to time employed was a young man by the name of Joseph Smith, Jun., to whom I was particularly attached.”

—NEWEL KNIGHT, 1826

who attended our meetings regularly, was Newel Knight, son of Joseph Knight.”⁹

Newel Knight was the first in his family and apparently the first of the Colesville Saints to accept the new gospel. During the last week in May 1830, he visited at Fayette, where he was baptized by David Whitmer.¹⁰ Soon after the first conference of the Church, held June 9, 1830, at the Whitmer farm, Joseph Smith returned to Colesville, accompanied by his wife, Emma, Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, and David Whitmer.

“The Sabbath arrived [June 27, 1830], we held our meeting, Oliver Cowdery preached, others bore testimony to the Book of Mormon, the doctrine of repentance, baptism for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost etc. . . . Early on Monday morning [June 28, 1830], Oliver Cowdery proceeded to baptize Emma Smith, Hezekiah Peck and wife [Martha Long], Joseph Knight and wife [Polly Peck], William Stringham, Joseph Knight Jun., Aaron Culver and wife [Hannah Peck], Levi Hall, Polly Knight and Julia Stringham.”¹¹

Although not named in the above account, there were others baptized on June 28, 1830. Esther Knight Stringham, daughter of Joseph Knight Sr. was baptized with her parents and her husband, William Stringham.¹² Sally Coburn Knight, wife of Newel Knight, was also baptized at this time. Anna Knight DeMille, daughter of Joseph Knight Sr. and wife of Freeborn DeMille, was similarly baptized.¹³ “A short time afterwards,” Emily Coburn, sister of Sally Coburn Knight, was baptized despite the strenuous objections of her father, Amariah Coburn, and the Reverend Mr. Shearer of the Presbyterian faith.¹⁴

Joseph Knight Jr. relates that the baptisms of June 28 were accompanied by disruptive events: "When we were going from the water, we were met by many of our neighbors, pointing at us and asking if we had been washing sheep; before Joseph could confirm us he was taken by the officers to Chenango Co. [South Bainbridge] for trial, for saying that the Book of Mormon was a Revelation from God; my father employed two lawyers [James Davidson and John Reid] to plead for him and cleared him; that night our wagons were turned over and wood piled on them, and some sunk in the water, rails were piled against our doors, and chains sunk in the stream and a great deal of mischief done. Before Joseph got to my Father's house he was taken again to be tried in Broome Co., Father employed the same lawyers who cleared him there."¹⁵

The confirmation of the new Saints, so rudely interrupted by the constable, was subsequently accomplished. Newel Knight and his wife, Sally, visited Joseph Smith in Harmony in early August 1830, and with Emma, they were confirmed members of the Church. The remaining confirmations were completed on August 29, 1830, when Joseph, Hyrum Smith, and John and David Whitmer visited Colesville. "That evening we assembled the Church, and confirmed them, partook of the Sacrament and held a happy meeting."¹⁶

The second conference of the Church was held in Fayette, New York, where "a number were baptized. . . and the word of the Lord prevailed."¹⁷ The minutes of this conference, which assembled at the Whitmer farm September 26–28, 1830, lists the "whole" membership of the Church as 62. They also note that Newel Knight was "ordained a priest under the hand of Brother Oliver Cowdery."¹⁸

NEWEL KNIGHT WAS THE FIRST IN HIS FAMILY AND THE FIRST OF THE COLESVILLE SAINTS TO ACCEPT THE NEW GOSPEL. IN MAY 1830, HE WAS BAPTIZED BY DAVID WHITMER.

Interior of the restored Joseph Knight Sr. home



ELIZABETH KNIGHT, 13-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER OF JOSEPH KNIGHT SR., WAS BAPTIZED AT COLESVILLE BY HYRUM SMITH ON NOVEMBER 1, 1830, THE YOUNGEST MEMBER TO BE BAPTIZED UP TO THAT TIME.

A few days afterward, in October 1830, Newel Knight and Hyrum Smith called on one of Newel's uncles, his mother's brother, Ezekial Peck. Both Ezekial and his wife, Electa Buck, embraced the gospel and were baptized.¹⁹ Elizabeth Knight, daughter of Joseph Knight Sr., was baptized at Colesville by Hyrum Smith on November 1, 1830. She was then 13 years of age and said to have been the youngest member to be baptized up to that time.²⁰

Orson Pratt was ordained an elder at Fayette by Joseph Smith on December 1, 1830, and sent on his first mission to Colesville to labor with Hyrum Smith and Newel Knight. He returned that same month to Fayette, accompanied by Hyrum.²¹ The brother of Martin Harris, Emer Harris, living at or near Windham, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, was contacted and baptized by Hyrum Smith and Newel Knight on February 10, 1831.²²

In January 1831, Jared Carter set out on a business trip of several weeks and stopped at the home of John Peck, a brother of Hezekiah Peck and Polly Peck Knight, in Lisle Township, Broome County. John was opposed to the work of Joseph Smith, but allowed Jared to examine a copy of the Book of Mormon: "After reading a while in the Book of Mormon and praying earnestly to the Lord that he would show me the truth of the Book I became immediately convinced that it was a Revelation of God & it had such an influence on my mind that

I had no mind to pursue my business.

... on visiting the church of Christ at Colesville & having an interview with them I felt it my duty to separate from Babalon [sic] and be baptized. Accordingly I was baptized by Hyrum Smith about the 20th of February for the remission of sins & as I was baptized I felt the influences of the Spirit of God for as I stepped out of the water I was wrapped in the spirit both soul & body even so that the chill of the cold water was taken from me."²³

There are others who affiliated with the Colesville Branch at this time, but the date and circumstances of their baptisms are still unidentified.

Interior of the restored Joseph Knight Sr. home



“In obedience to the commandment which had been given, I, together with the Colesville Branch, began to make preparations to go to Ohio. . . . As might be expected, we were obliged to make great sacrifices of our property.”

—NEWEL KNIGHT, JANUARY 1831

Not all of the early converts of the Colesville Branch stayed faithful to their covenants or remained with the Colesville group. Reed Peck turned antagonistic toward Mormonism during the “Missouri Period” and witnessed against the Saints at a trial in Richmond, Missouri, in November 1838. He was subsequently excommunicated from the Church. Although he chose to disassociate himself from the Church, Reed Peck’s father, mother, brother, and sister continued with the Saints to Nauvoo.²⁴

The third conference of the Church was convened at the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette on January 2, 1831. At that gathering, the Prophet Joseph Smith advanced a revelation from the Lord that vitally affected the entire Colesville membership: “Wherefore, for this cause I give unto you the commandment that ye should go to the Ohio; and there I will give unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high.”²⁵ Of this revolutionary announcement, Newel Knight simply states: “In obedience to the commandment which had been given, I, together with the Colesville Branch, began to make preparations to go to Ohio. . . . As might be expected, we were obliged to make great sacrifices of our property. The most of my time was occupied in visiting the brethren, and helping to arrange their affairs, so that we might travel together in one company.”²⁶

In the midst of these preparations, Hyrum Smith, presiding elder of the Colesville Branch, received instructions from the Prophet to come to Kirtland. The Prophet needed his assistance.

Newel was aided by his young brother, Joseph Jr., who in early April of 1831 went on foot among

certain of the brethren to alert them concerning the proposed move.²⁷

At Buffalo, the Colesville Saints were frustrated in their efforts to take a sloop for Fairport, Ohio, because “the wind blew from the lake and filled the harbor with ice, so that we were detained nearly two weeks.”²⁸ Approximately a week after their initial arrival, they were joined by 80 Saints who had embarked from Waterloo, Seneca County, under the leadership of Lucy Mack Smith. While these two groups were conversing, still another boat “landed, having on board about thirty brethren, among whom was Thomas B. Marsh, who immediately joined us.”²⁹

Upon their arrival at Kirtland, “it was advised that the Colesville branch remain together, and go to a neighboring town called Thompson [16 miles northeast of Kirtland], as a man by the name of Copely had a considerable tract of land there which he offered to let the Saints occupy.”³⁰ Here they were to be organized under the law of consecration and stewardship. Joseph Knight Jr. recounted: “We went to Kirtland, Ohio [then to Thompson, Ohio], and commenced preparing houses on a brother’s land who had a thousand acres, my folks came on, they were called the Colesville church; we planted and sowed a great deal; the man was turned out of the church for bad conduct; his name was Lemon Copley, he then began to persecute us and we had to leave his farm and pay sixty dollars damage for fitting up his houses and planting his ground. We then had a Revelation to go to the western line of the States; we arrived at Independence, Jackson Co., Missouri, 25 July 1831.”³¹

Settling in Kaw Township, the Colesville Branch continued to maintain its identity throughout the stay in Jackson County. Even when the Jackson mob drove them into Clay County, Missouri, during the winter of 1833, Newel Knight attested that “the Colesville Branch, as usual, kept together and formed a small settlement on the Missouri bottoms, building themselves temporary houses.”³² However, in 1836, when the Saints in Clay County were again required to leave their homes, the Colesville Branch became a nonentity,

its membership being absorbed into other organizations of the Church. . . .

From the very inception of “Mormonism,” the Saints comprising the Colesville Branch linked their lives inexorably with the restored gospel and the volume that had inspired their conversion, the Book of Mormon. They relinquished family, friends, homes, and material comforts in pursuit of their testimonies. ▣

The Saints comprising the Colesville Branch linked their lives inexorably with the restored gospel and the volume that had inspired their conversion, the Book of Mormon. They relinquished family, friends, homes, and material comforts in pursuit of their testimonies.

1 “Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” December 31, 1831. (Located in the LDS Church Historian’s Office, Salt Lake City, Utah).

2 Hamilton Child, *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Chenango County, N.Y. for 1869–70* (Syracuse, 1869), 82; *Broome Republican* (Binghamton), May 5, 1831.

3 “Newel Knight Journals, 1800–1845,” #318. (Located in LDS Church Historian’s Office); “Newel Knight’s Journal,” *Scraps of Biography—Tenth Book of the Faith Promoting Series*, Juvenile Instructor Office (Salt Lake City, 1883), 47. H. P. Smith, *History of Broome County* (Syracuse, 1885), 332. The Broome County, New York, Census for 1825 designates Joseph Knight Sr. as operating one of the two carding machines listed in Colesville Township.

4 *Scraps of Biography*, 47, 48.

5 *Joseph Knight’s Incidents of History from 1827 to 1844*, compiled by T. Thomas Bullock from loose sheets in Joseph Knight’s possession, August 16, 1862 (located in LDS Church Historian’s Office). This is Joseph Knight Jr.’s account. Broome County Deeds, Liber 3, 36–37. Newel Knight reversed his initial skepticism and became an outstanding leader in the early Church organization. However, Nahum continued his reluctance to accept the tenets of Joseph Smith.

6 Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City, 1902), Vol. 1, 47 [commonly called *Documentary History of the Church*; hereafter cited as *DHC*].

7 Smith, *History of the Prophet Joseph*, 100–106.

8 *DHC*, Vol. 1, 48–76; *The Wayne Sentinel* (Palmyra), March 26, 1830.

9 *DHC*, Vol. 1, 81–82.

10 *Scraps of Biography*, 52.

11 *Ibid.*, 53–55; *Utah Genealogical Magazine*, Vol. 26 (1935), 108; Vol. 27 (1936), 78–79; *DHC*, Vol. 1, 88 lists a “Levi Hale” rather than the “Levi Hall” named by Newel Knight. The writer believes that “Levi Hall” is correct.

12 *Utah Genealogical Magazine*, Vol. 26 (1935), 148.

13 Letter of Elsie McGee to Preston Nibley, October 3, 1955 (located in the Joseph Knight Letter File, LDS Church Historian’s Office).

14 *Scraps of Biography*, 54. Emily Coburn later denied the faith and was author of a book on “Mormonism”: Emily M. Austin, *Mormonism or Life Among the Mormons* (Madison, 1882). Correction, Emily’s father was “Amariah” not “Amasa,” letter from Slade family genealogist Solinda Christofferson, Hyde Park, Utah to Larry C. Porter, November 18, 2009.

15 *Joseph Knight’s Incidents of History from 1827 to 1844*, 2; *DHC*, Vol. 1, 88–89.

16 *Scraps of Biography*, 62–64; *DHC*, Vol. 1, 106–109.

17 *DHC*, Vol. 1, 118.

18 “Far West Record, The Conference Minutes and Record Book of Christ’s Church of Latter-day Saints,” 2 (Located in the LDS Historian’s Office).

19 *Utah Genealogical Magazine*, Vol. 27 (1936), 78–79.

20 *Ibid.*, Vol. 26 (1935), 150.

21 “Journal History,” December 1, 1830.

22 “Early Church Information File,” The Genealogical Society: *Scraps of Biography*, 65–66.

23 “Jared Carter Journals, 1830–1834.” (Located in LDS Historian’s Office).

24 *Utah Genealogical Magazine*, Vol. 27 (1936), 78–79.

25 Doctrine and Covenants 38:32.

26 *Scraps of Biography*, 68.

27 *Joseph Knight’s Incidents of History from 1827 to 1844*.

28 *Scraps of Biography*, 69.

29 Smith, *History of the Prophet Joseph*, 174, 177.

30 *Scraps of Biography*, 69.

31 *Joseph Knight’s Incidents of History from 1827 to 1844*.

32 *Scraps of Biography*, 85.

Photos of Knight farm and interior of home by Kenneth R. Mays

Monument to Joseph and Hyrum at the Colesville Branch

Location: Joseph Knight Sr.'s home in Colesville, New York; Highway I-88, exit 6 toward Harpursville/Nineveh; cross Nineveh bridge; west side of Hwy. 233, a half mile south of the bridge from Nineveh.

Inscription reads: **The Prophet Joseph Smith and his Devoted Brother Hyrum**

In October of 1830 Hyrum brought his family from Palmyra, New York, to the home of his longtime friend Newel Knight. He came by appointment from Joseph Smith to become the first Branch President of the newly organized Colesville Branch of the LDS Church.

Newel Knight recorded, "Most of Hyrum's time, as also that of my own, was spent in the villages around, preaching the gospel wherever we could find any who would listen." The fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ was restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith with his family and friends always by his side.

John Taylor said of Joseph and Hyrum "In life they were not divided and in death they were not separated," D&C 135:3.

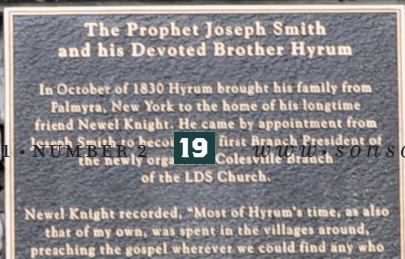
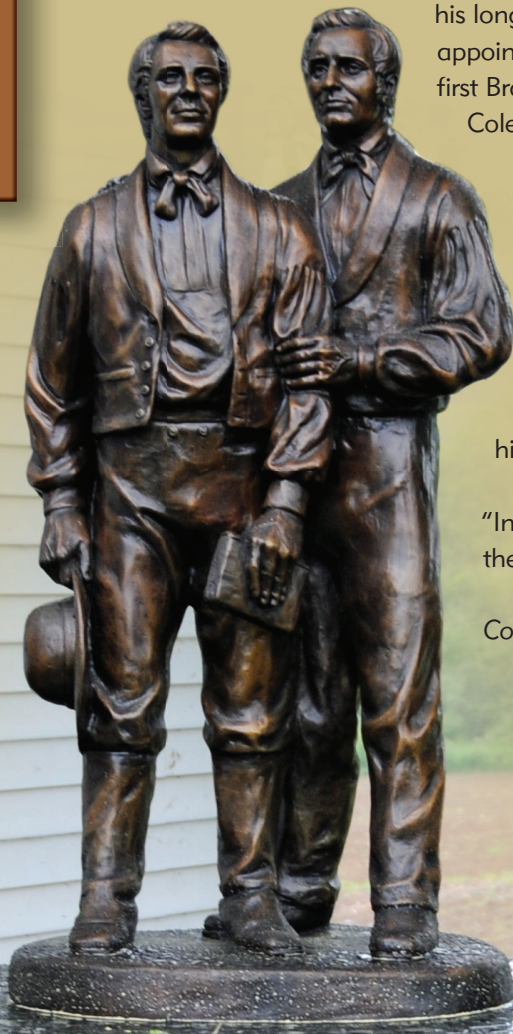
*Monument Erected May 2012,
Colesville Branch Restoration* 



Newel Knight Monument

Location: Approximately one mile west and half a mile south of Niobrara, Nebraska.

Inscription reads: Born Sept. 13, 1899, Died Jan. 11, 1847; Member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Erected in loving appreciation of our FATHER who died during the hardships of the Mormon exodus from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt 5:10



Newel & Lydia Knight

BY ANDREW JENSON

Excerpts from LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, Vol. 2, p.773–776

Newel Knight was born September 13, 1800, in Marlborough, Windham County, Vermont, the son of Joseph Knight and Polly Peck. His family moved to the state of New York when he was nine years old, first to Bainbridge township and later to Colesville, Broome County, NY. In 1825 he married Sally Coburn, a woman of rather delicate health, who held an honorable position in the choir of one of the most respectable churches in the vicinity. After his marriage, Newel went a few miles distant and put in operation a carding machine and afterward a gristmill. During this time his wife gave birth to a child, who did not live. Newel's own health gradually declined, and being told by a physician that he had consumption, he quit the mill business and moved back to Colesville, settling near his father's place.

During this time the Knight family was frequently visited by Joseph Smith, the young Prophet, in whose divine mission Newel became a firm believer. Newel was a faithful and staunch member of the Church, continuing thus until the time of his death. He was with the Prophet during his arrest and trial in South Bainbridge, Chenango County, and Colesville, Broome County.

Early in 1831, Newel and his wife accompanied the Colesville branch on their journey to Kirtland and afterward to Missouri, where Newel was present at the dedication of the

temple spot August 3, 1831. When the Prophet visited them the next year (1832), he blessed an infant son who had been born to Newel Knight and his wife on October 4, 1831.

Brother Knight was present when the Church met together at the ferry at the Big Blue River, Missouri, April 6, 1833, to celebrate the birthday of the Church for the first time. Afterward he became subject to the terrible persecutions which befell the Saints in Jackson County and was finally expelled. While exposed to persecutions and hardships in Clay County, Newel Knight's wife took sick and died on September 15, 1834, and Brother Newel's own health also being poor, he decided to go east, making the best arrangements he could for the care of his little son Samuel and an aged aunt.

November 24, 1835, Newel married Lydia Goldthwait, Joseph Smith the Prophet performing the marriage ceremony. [It was the first marriage ceremony the Prophet ever performed.] After receiving his anointings in the Kirtland Temple, [they] left Kirtland April 7, 1836.

Soon after Newel's arrival in Missouri the spirit of mobocracy again manifested itself, and, under the threats made by mobs, the Saints were compelled to leave their possessions in Clay County and move out upon the prairies of what afterward became Caldwell County. There Newel Knight made a new home for

by Newel Knight

"Our persecutions did not abate in the least and it seemed as though all hell was aroused to do us injury. The brethren confined in Liberty Jail after being subjected to the most terrible indignities during their six month's imprisonment, finally succeeded in making their escape and soon joined the body of the Saints.

"Again I prepared to leave my home and with my family gather to Commerce, which was the place that had been chosen for the future location of the Saints. Some few families had already gone there and a nucleus of a 'Mormon' town had been formed.

"I soon selected a piece of ground and commenced to build a home for myself, but before many days had passed I was advised by Brother Joseph to assist in the erection of a flouring mill, so that the Saints might thereby be benefited. I therefore ceased my own operations and began the new labor to which I had been assigned. From that time until I left Nauvoo with the Saints to find a home in the barren wilds of Western America, I was engaged more or less in the building and working of grist and saw mills for the benefit of the Saints. Sometimes I was without the necessities of life, being bereft of the goods and clothing which my family needed; sometimes I was surrounded by not only the necessities but also the comforts of life; sometimes I rejoiced in the society of my friends, and sometimes enemies surrounded me, seeking my destruction because of my religion. But in the midst of these varied circumstances I never felt to doubt the truth of the gospel or the divinity of Joseph Smith's mission." ▣

himself and family but was driven out during the general exodus of the Saints from the State of Missouri in 1839. In Illinois, [the Saints were] driven into exile once more in 1846.

Newel and his family traveled westward in Bishop George Miller's company and wintered among the Ponca Indians on the Running Water in what is now northern Nebraska. Here Newel Knight, exposed to the hardships of the winter, took sick and died on January 11, 1847. His wife Lydia describes the end of her husband as follows: "On Monday morning, Jan. 4, 1847, Bro. Knight, whose health had been failing for some time, did not arise as usual, and on going to him he said, 'Lydia, I believe I shall go to rest this winter.' The next night he awoke with a severe pain in his right side, a fever had also set in, and he expressed himself to me that he did not expect to recover. From this time until the 10th of the month, the Elders came frequently and prayed for my husband. After each administration he would rally and be at ease for a short time and then relapse again into suffering. I felt at last as if I could not endure his sufferings any longer and that I ought not to hold him here. I knelt by his bedside, and with my hand upon his pale forehead asked my Heavenly Father to forgive my sins, and that the sufferings of my companion might cease, and if he was appointed unto death, and could not remain with us that he might be quickly

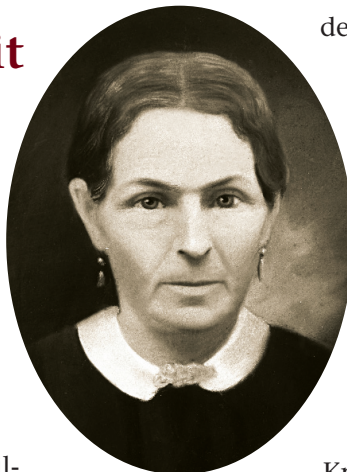
eased from pain and fall asleep in peace. Almost immediately all pain left him and in a short time he sweetly fell asleep in death, without a struggle or a groan, at half past six on the morning of the 11th of January, 1847" [See *Scraps of Biography—Tenth Book of the Faith Promoting Series*, Juvenile Instructor Office (Salt Lake City, 1883)].

Lydia Goldthwait

was born June 9, 1812, in Sutton, Worcester county, Massachusetts, the daughter of Jesse Goldthwait and Sally Burt. When 15 years old she was sent to a boarding school in a village where she met a young man by the name of Calvin Baily, to whom she was married in the fall of 1828. This marriage proved an unhappy one (though it was blessed with two children), and three years after her marriage she was deserted by her husband. She then returned to the home of her parents.

During a visit to Mt. Pleasant, Upper Canada, she first became acquainted with the Latter-day Saints. A number of meetings were held, and the Nickerson family, Lydia, and others were baptized. When Lydia in the summer of 1834 returned to her father's home in New York state, her relatives did all they could to persuade her to leave "Mormonism." At length she grew restless and unhappy on account of the constant railery and derision showered upon her by her parents and therefore decided to go to Kirtland, Ohio, which at that time was a gathering place of the Saints.

Immediately on reaching Kirtland in the spring of 1835 she met Vincent Knight, who approached Sister Lydia, saying: "Sister, the Prophet is in bondage and has been brought into distress by the persecutions of the wicked, and if you have any means to give, it would be of benefit to him." She at once emptied her purse containing \$50, which was all she had. Bro. Knight looked at it, counted it and fervently exclaimed, "Thank God, this will release and set the Prophet free."



For six or eight months after that she lived a pleasant life in the home of Vincent Knight. In the fall of 1835 Hyrum Smith asked Lydia to come to his house and assist his wife. While living there she became acquainted with Newel Knight, who boarded at the place while working on the Kirtland Temple. Newel Knight (who was not related to the Vincent Knight previously mentioned) is described by Sister Lydia as a tall man with light brown hair, a keen blue eye, and a very energetic and determined manner; he was a widower, whose wife, a delicate woman, had died the previous fall, in consequence of the trials and persecutions she had suffered, and left an infant only two days old.

Brother Knight, in course of time, made Lydia an offer of marriage, which she after some hesitation accepted, and the two became man and wife. Newel Knight continued his labors on the temple and generally attended the school of the elders in the evenings. In February 1837, Newel Knight purchased 40 acres of land from the government near Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri.

When Newel died on January 11, 1847, Lydia became a widow with seven helpless children. She crossed the plains in 1850 in Edward Hunter's company, arriving in Salt Lake City on October 3, 1850.

For several years she resided in the City and subsequently located in Provo, where she taught school. Next she resided at Payson and Santa Clara, but when the St. George Temple was finished in 1877 she was called by President Brigham Young to labor as an ordinance worker. She responded cheerfully, made her permanent home in St. George, and attended faithfully to her duties in the temple until the day of her death, April 3, 1884.

Sister Lydia's life was full of events and her character full of integrity; she possessed a lovely disposition, gained the confidence and good will of all who knew her and died a most devoted and faithful Latter-day Saint. ▣

Lydia Goldthwait image at familysearch.org; Philo Dibble image at allenbutlerhistory.com.

Miraculous Healing

of Philo Dibble by Newel Knight

BY WILLIAM G. HARTLEY

On November 4, [1833], a large band of Missourians captured the Mormon ferry at the Big Blue River. Riders scattered several Saints, including David Whitmer, who rushed to Kaw township to recruit help. In response, 30 armed men, probably Knights included, hurried toward the ferry. The 30 men, with 15 guns, reached Christian Whitmer's house at sunset, where they surprised about 60 well-armed mobbers bullying Christian. Firing commenced. Joseph Knight Jr., working at his mill a mile away, could hear the shooting. In the skirmish, two Missourians and several horses were killed. Mormon Andrew Barber was killed, too, "the first man in this dispensation who was martyred for the truth's sake," Newel eulogized.

Brother Philo Dibble was shot in the stomach. A veteran doctor checked him and declared the wounds would be fatal. The next day, eluding a mob mingling near the house where Dibble lay, Newel slipped inside: "I went to the bed where he lay in extreme agony. As I looked upon him, not daring to utter a word of prayer, I laid one hand on his head while with the other I drew the bed curtain to hide us a little from the mob. And lifted my desires to the Lord in behalf of Brother Dibble. After which I arose and went away. As I left I saw tears fast streaming from his eyes, yet no word passed, but I felt that I had done my errand and felt trust the event to the Lord."

Newel sneaked out cautiously, avoiding the mob.

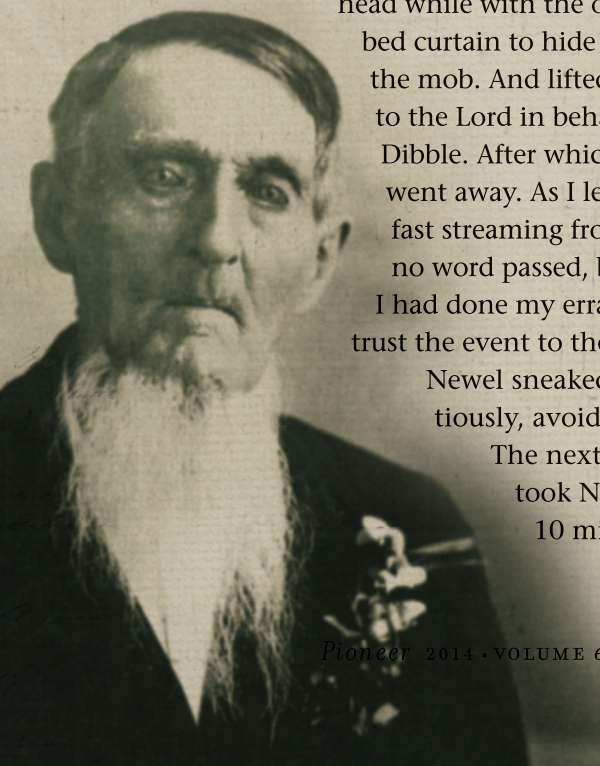
The next day business took Newel some 10 miles from the

place, where "to my great joy I found Brother Dibble to all appearances perfectly well. He told me that at the time I laid my hand upon his head he felt the Spirit of the Lord rest upon him and gently pass through his body, before it passed all pain and soreness, so that he felt perfectly easy. . . . He rested that night and the next day made his escape, and was out of the county when I met him."

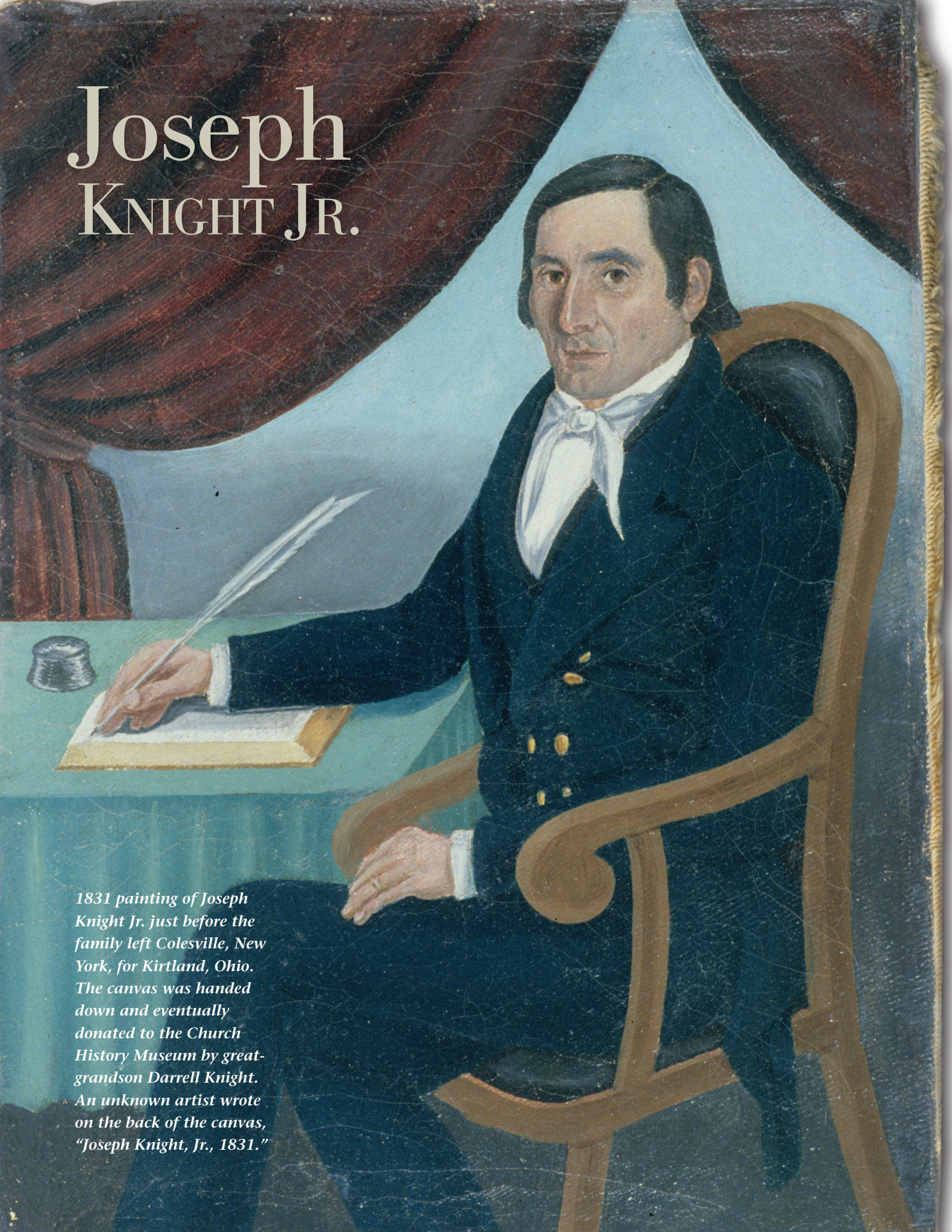
Philo Dibble wrote about this wonderful healing, too, and his account adds details not in Newel's recounting: "After the surgeon left me, Brother Newell Knight came to see me. He sat on the right side of my bed and laid his hand on my head but never spoke. I felt spirit resting upon me at the crown of my head before his hand touched me and I knew immediately that I was going to be healed. It seemed to form like a ring under the skin and followed down my body. When the ring came to the wound, another ring formed around the first bullet hole, also the second and third. Then they formed on each shoulder and on each hip and rings formed down to my fingers and toes, and left me. I immediately arose and discharged three quarts of blood or more, with some pieces of my clothes that had been driven into my body by the bullets. I then dressed myself and went out doors. . . . From that time not a drop of blood came from me and I never afterwards felt the slightest pain or inconvenience from my wound except that I was somewhat weak from the loss of blood."

"Oh how did our hearts rejoice and give thanks to God," Newel wrote, "who had heard and answered the petitions although offered up secret[ly] in behalf of this servant while surround[ed] with fiends in human form." Brother Dibble lived for many years. ▣

See William G. Hartley, *Stand by My Servant Joseph: The Story of the Joseph Knight Family and the Restoration*, *Deseret Book* (2004), 75–177.



Joseph KNIGHT JR.



1831 painting of Joseph Knight Jr. just before the family left Colesville, New York, for Kirtland, Ohio. The canvas was handed down and eventually donated to the Church History Museum by great-grandson Darrell Knight. An unknown artist wrote on the back of the canvas, "Joseph Knight, Jr., 1831."

Joseph Knight Jr. was the third son of Joseph Knight Sr. and his wife, Polly Peck Knight. They were also the parents of four daughters.

Joseph Junior followed two older sons, Nahum and Newel. Nahum was born in 1796, Newel in 1800, and Joseph Junior, June 21, 1808, at Halifax, Windham Co., Vermont. As the third son, Joseph Junior may have been named after the old English custom of naming the third son after the father of the family. This custom may have influenced Joseph Smith Senior, who named his third son Joseph Junior also. The Smith and Knight juniors both were born in Vermont not far from each other and only three years apart. The names of Joseph and Newel both became repeated names that were used in many generations of the Knight family.

In 1826 Joseph Smith Jr. came to work for Father Knight. The two juniors slept, ate, and worked together on the farms owned by Father Knight. Nahum and Newel were married and living apart from the family. Joseph Junior was the only son still in the family home. In the evening the young prophet shared the marvelous story of the First Vision. Father Knight and Joseph Junior readily accepted what they heard from this trusted friend.

Joseph Junior was raised to work the farm as well as a gristmill and two carding machines. His father bought three other farms and hired "many" hands. The bond that developed during the months of joint labor was reflected on many future occasions when Father Knight and Joseph Junior furnished supplies to Joseph Smith Jr.

The temporal support started with a request of the Prophet for \$50 to sustain them. Joseph Knight Jr. sold a house lot and gave him the money he requested and a one-horse wagon. He wrote, "My father and I often went to see him and carry something to live upon." This was the first of many trips to Harmony, Pennsylvania (30 miles), to bring provisions so Joseph Smith Jr. and Oliver could continue the work of translation. Father

*"Joseph [Smith]
and I worked and slept
together: my Father
said Joseph was the
best hand he ever
hired, we found him
a boy of truth."*

—JOSEPH KNIGHT, JR.

Knight wrote, "When I came home I bought some nine or ten bushels of grain and five or six bushels potatoes and a pound of tea, and I went down to see him (Joseph Smith Jr.) as the only male helper at home. Assistance on other occasions included some shoes, and paper on which to record the words of the Book of Mormon."

Joseph Knight Junior was baptized into the Church June 28, 1830. He was baptized by Oliver Cowdery in a dammed up stream in Colesville along with many Knight relatives in spite of persecutions of a local mob. Almost all of the Knights were baptized in 1830, the same year as the organization of the Church. In January of 1831 the New York Saints were instructed to move to Ohio and to live a new economic order. The persecution was so great in Colesville that Joseph Smith Jr. and Father Knight left for Ohio. They left their property in the hands of a lawyer to sell and used Joseph Jr.'s \$50 sleigh to travel to Thompson, Ohio. It is not known if they were able to sell their beautiful property by the Susquehanna River. Their group numbered 67 relatives. Most went by water, but Joseph Knight Jr. and some others went by land because of the ice on Lake Erie.

They arrived at Thompson, east of Kirtland, to settle on land recently consecrated by a new convert (Leland Copely). They were the first to live the arrangement later called the "United Order" for about two months. The convert changed his mind and ordered the Saints off his land. In these dire circumstances they were directed to move again to Missouri.

In Jackson County, Missouri, Junior recorded that he and Newel built the first mill for the Saints. He also made furniture to equip the new homes, built the first printing office, and fitted out a new store. Mobs destroyed these two constructions.

Before leaving Ohio, Joseph Junior, at 23, married Betsey Covert, almost 19, on March 22,

1832, with Oliver Cowdery officiating. Their first child, Martha Ann, was born a year later in Kaw Township, where they settled with the Colesville Branch. Joseph Jr. was one of eight Knights who donated to the Kirtland Temple building fund.

Persecution raged in Jackson County. Sixteen houses were destroyed in one night. In October 1833, a mob boasted they would tear down Joseph Jr.'s mill. Sixty men from the branch protected the mill and saved it from destruction. Many of the Saints listed damages by the mobs. Joseph Jr.'s losses to the mob included "a mill burnt down, a house burnt down, and the loss of three acres of land, fifty peach trees, hay, and corn."

The Saints tried to find safety in Clay County. Joseph Junior stayed three weeks in Jackson County after the rest of the family left in order to

"keep grinding for feeding the Saints 'till the first of December 1833. Then I left with meal and flour which the Saints used 'till all got houses where I was." This compassion to stay behind was repeated several times by Joseph Junior.

The Knights lived through the period of the worst persecution in Missouri. They eventually were forced with the Saints into Far West. They bought lots in the same block east of the temple block in Far West. Joseph Junior recorded that he was a short distance west of Haun's Mill and heard the gunshots and shouts of the massacre.

Joseph Junior and Betsey had six children, a boy who died early in Nauvoo and five daughters, two of whom died in infancy. Only three daughters lived to maturity. Betsey's biography reads: "Three weeks after the birth of their third child

Miracle of the Quail, by Sandra B. Rast

"The Suffering and sadness of the camp I shall never forget. It is impossible for human tongue to describe the cries of the hungry children for food and shelter and the groans of the sick and dying and the sadness of others for loss of loved ones. What a terrible night of misery. We didn't have a light except a candle which flickered out in the wind and rain as it was carried from one place to another to care for the sick and dying. It was here under these heart wrenching conditions that God sent a countless flock of quail. They were so tame we could catch them in our hands."

—MARY FIELD GARNER, THE LAST LEAF



at Far West a mob drove them from their home, leaving the stock and everything that could not be hastily thrown into their wagon. For the next few years they were driven until they crossed the Mississippi. When they got to Nauvoo, they were without possessions and life was very hard. After four years of peace the mobs again attacked them. Betsey and children hid in the basement and finally had to flee. It was so sudden; they were forced to join the 'poor camp' on the banks of the river until they were rescued. They experienced the miracle of the quail. It saved their lives."

Joseph Smith Jr. asked Joseph Junior to operate a mill in La Harpe so the Saints could have flour and meal. He remained there until it became dangerous with the mob roaming at will, destroying property and committing atrocities. In Nauvoo in 1842 the Prophet entered the names of Joseph Knight Sr., Newel, and Joseph Junior into the Lambs Book of Life as those who had been most faithful. He added Newel and Joseph Knight Jr., "for they are my friends." This phrase was the title of the first edition of the family book. By 1843 Newel's wealth had tripled and Joseph Junior's had doubled.

Both Newel and Joseph Junior became involved again in mill building and operating. Joseph moved his family to Nauvoo for protection. This time Joseph Junior operated a steam mill. Before he left La Harpe he sent flour and meal into Nauvoo for the Saints under siege. "Afterwards, I sent 200 lbs. of pork to them," he recorded. He reported in his history that at La Harpe, he was ordained a priest in 1846 and a high priest in the temple in Nauvoo by Isaac Morley and C. C. Rich.

Records indicate that Brigham Young ordained Joseph Junior a bishop in Iowa and set him apart as the bishop of the Block House Ward. It is believed that President Young gave him the assignment to take care of all the refugees coming into Winter Quarters from the east. He received a commendation by George A. Smith and Ezra T. Benson (April 1848): "Bishop Knight has been running about here, taking care of the poor, as he could not get but little help from the people, they are so busy raising potatoes, etc.; he has been very diligent and done the best in his power."

He finally resigned due to poor health and needing time to prepare to move west to Utah. It is not known if he traveled together with Lydia, widow of Newel, or not, although they both arrived in the valley in the fall of 1850. He was delayed due to a broken wagon wheel. Betsey encouraged him to fix it soon. Another nonmember family was in need, and he stopped to tend to their needs. When finished, he found out the father of the needy family was a wheelwright, who was happy to return the kindness by repairing the Knights' wagon. This stranded family later joined the Church and said it was a direct result of Joseph Junior's kindness.

Joseph Junior took other wives: Adeline Johnson, who settled in the 19th Ward in Salt Lake City, and Aba Weldon. Family tradition passed down from this period explained those marriages were assignments from higher authority to provide temporal support for these single women, and he did not live with or sire children with them. He complained to Brigham Young that his only son had died in Nauvoo and no one was able to continue his name. President Young told him to marry a new English convert, Mary Woolerton, and that she would give him sons. He obeyed, and Mary gave birth to three children, two of which were sons, Joseph III and Miland. It was the latter son who fathered ten sons and a large posterity.

Some scanty records indicate that Joseph Junior served a mission to the Moqui Indians in Arizona. They were of the Pueblo tribal nation. He and Joseph Young saved the life of Jacob Hamlin from a flood in Santa Clara, Utah.

There is no known record that he ever served in the office of bishop again in Utah. Joseph Junior died on November 3, 1866, at the age of 58.

Those who descended from this pioneer of the restoration will always admire his courage, devotion to his friend Joseph Smith, and example of generosity to serve the Saints, at times as the last one to leave in dangerous situations. ▮

Source: Darrell Knight, great-grandson of Joseph Knight Jr.



The Wheelwright and Joseph Knight Jr.'s Wagon

John Harris was born in Green, Northumberland, Pennsylvania, on December 2, 1808, and his wife, Lovina Eiler, was born in Dayton, Montgomery, Ohio, on December 17, 1807.

In 1846, probably in February, John and Lovina Harris and their eight children, ranging from 2 to 15 years old, left Indiana intending to move to Oregon.

On this journey, John Harris became desperately ill. For three days Lovina was beside herself but could do nothing to relieve his suffering. A company of Mormon pioneers were spending a few days camped nearby, Brother Joseph Knight Jr. being among these.

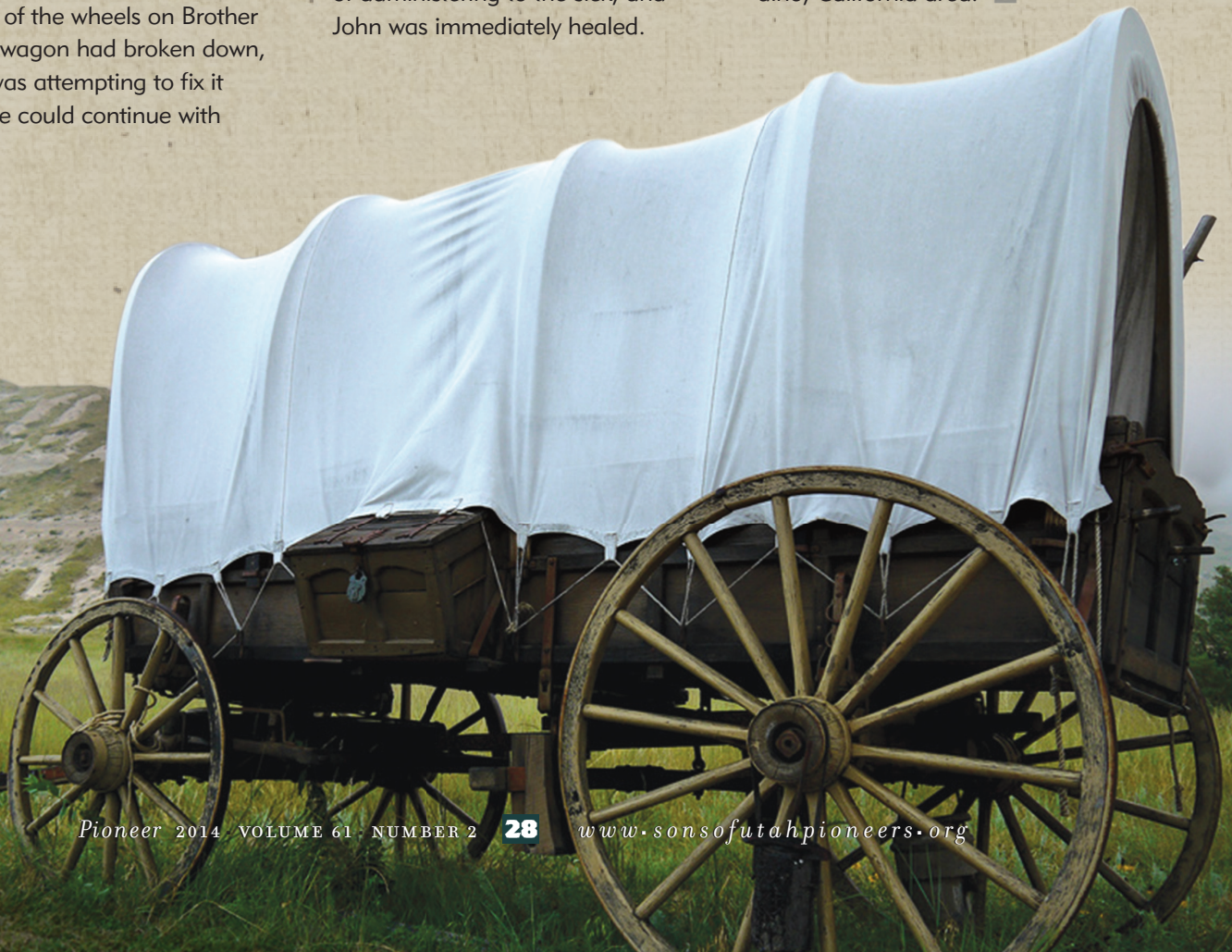
One of the wheels on Brother Knight's wagon had broken down, and he was attempting to fix it so that he could continue with

the Saints. As he worked he felt prompted that all was not well in the strangers' camp nearby. He told his wife of his feelings, but her response was that if he didn't get busy they would never be able to continue to travel with their company. So he went back to work. Three times this prompting came to him, and finally he could stand it no longer.

He picked up another brother, and they approached the Harris camp. Joseph Knight told Lovina of his feelings and asked if anything was wrong or if they could be of assistance. She told him of her husband's severe suffering, and Brother Knight offered to administer to him. She replied that she didn't know what that meant but she would appreciate any help they could give. Brother Knight and his companion performed the priesthood ordinance of administering to the sick, and John was immediately healed.

Being a wheelwright by trade, Harris arose and went with Knight to repair his wagon. The Harris couple were so impressed by this group of Saints and what they heard from them concerning the restored gospel that they then cast their lot, joined the Church, and came to Utah instead of going to Oregon.

According to the journal of John Harris, he and Lovina were baptized in the Mississippi River near Nauvoo, Illinois, on March 29, 1846, by Elder Richard Sprage. He attended the dedication of the Nauvoo Temple on May 1st of that year and then began his journey to Utah with the second pioneer group. His oldest children were baptized in the Grand River on June 4, 1846. John and his family stayed in Salt Lake City for a short time and then were called to help settle the San Bernardino, California area. ▣



Jesse Knight

and the Riches of Life

BY DIANE L. MANGUM

The story of Jesse Knight is a western adventure—with wagon trains and mining claims and a poor boy finding great wealth. Yet Jesse Knight is remarkable not for what he had but for what he gave away. What set him apart was his generosity. He believed his wealth was not a personal reward but merely a responsibility he was to administer for the blessing of others.

Jesse was born in Nauvoo on September 6, 1845, to Newel and Lydia Knight. The Knights were in the first company of Saints to leave Council Bluffs for the mountains of the West, departing in late 1846. The company was sidetracked, however, and chose to winter in Nebraska on the Niobrara River. Food was scarce, but the weather was unseasonably warm. Even so, as the new year began, Newel fell ill and died, as did 22 others in the company before spring.⁴

Lydia rejoined the main body of the Saints at Winter Quarters in the spring of 1847. Widowed and expecting a seventh child, Lydia sent her teams and wagons across the plains with others in need. The oldest boy, Samuel, went on ahead with another family to the Salt Lake Valley.

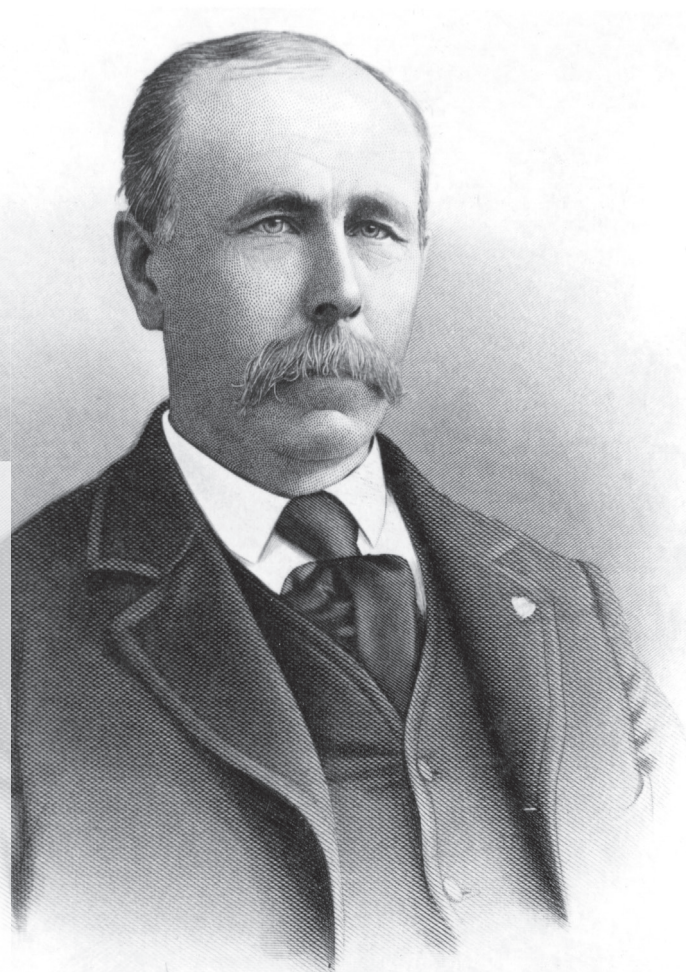
For a year, Jesse Knight's mother cared for her children in a dugout home, laundering and sewing for others to provide for her children.⁵ When at last her wagons and oxen were brought back, the animals were worn beyond use, so she obtained a loan from Church funds to get a new team to cross the plains.⁶ Jesse was a boy of five years when he entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1850.

Jesse's first memories were of Salt Lake City, where his mother taught school and he tended cows. Family resources were scarce. As a child, Jesse spent many hours gathering pigweed and

sego roots to help the family's food supply. But his mother, working as a teacher, was able to repay her debt to the Church Emigration fund within two years.⁷ By the age of 11, Jesse had arranged for a share in a team of oxen, which he used to haul firewood, getting large boys to help him load the wagon.⁸

In 1857, Lydia took her family to Provo, where Jesse worked gleaning potatoes and herding cows. His mother remarried, and by the age of 15, Jesse had a job for the Overland Mail Station, driving a loaded wagon to Ely, Nevada. The next dozen years of his life were spent hauling freight, building railroad lines, and even returning to Nebraska as a hired hand to help bring another company of Saints across the plains.⁹

Much to the anguish of his mother, somewhere in his travels through mining towns and railroad camps, Jesse lost the faith that had been so important to his parents. He once explained that he always championed the cause of the underdog, and it seemed to him that the "Gentiles,"



who were much outnumbered in the early days of Utah, were the underdog.¹⁰

Nonetheless, Jesse met a lovely young Latter-day Saint, Amanda McEwan, and they were married on January 18, 1869. They built a two-room adobe home in Payson, and Jesse started a ranching business. He and Amanda did well enough and enjoyed raising their young children. In fact, when once asked how it was that he got his children to mind so well, he said, "Well, I try to find out what they want to do and then tell them to do it."¹¹

Despite a wife who was faithful in the Church and a mother who pleaded for her son to reconsider his beliefs, Jesse continued to claim antagonism to the Church—although in later years he admitted that among outsiders he had been known as "the young Mormon" and had defended the Church.¹²

Several years after his mother died, Jesse had an experience that changed his life. A dead rat contaminated water in the well near his home, and Jesse's two-year-old daughter, Jennie, was the first to catch a fever from the water. Jesse adored little Jennie, and he was devastated when doctors told him there was nothing they could do to save her. Amanda begged Jesse to let the elders of the Church administer to the child, but Jesse wouldn't hear of it, saying he had no faith in such things. Amanda persisted: "I have, and [I] think my feelings should be considered at such a serious moment."¹³

Jesse relented, and soon after the elders administered to the dying child, Jennie regained consciousness. From that moment on, Jesse was a changed man. His son Will later wrote, "He had seen the power of the Lord made manifest and remembered the words of his mother. He began to plead with the Lord to forgive him."¹⁴

Still, the sickness continued for several weeks in the family as the four other children, Minerva, Will, Ray, and Inez, all fell ill. In fact, the eldest, Minerva, died of the fever in late 1887, a few months after Jennie's miraculous healing. Yet this did not cause Jesse to falter in his new faith. He later wrote: "I remembered now that when she was a baby she had diphtheria, and that then, almost seventeen years ago, I had promised the Lord that if he would spare her life I would not

forget Him. I had not kept that promise. How keenly I felt the justice of her being taken from us! I suffered in my feelings. I prayed for forgiveness and help. My prayer was answered and I received a testimony."¹⁵

From the time of Jesse's conversion, he concerned himself with finding ways to pay back the Lord for his years of unbelief.

The Knight family lived in Payson, about 25 miles from the Tintic mining district. Herding cattle sometimes took them to that region, and occasionally Jesse and his boys tried their hand at prospecting. Generally, they had no more success than other prospectors.

But one day while Jesse was in the mining district, he learned of a friend's intentions to cheat him in business. Frustrated, he went to the mountains to think.¹⁶ As he sat under a pine tree on Godiva Mountain, he heard a voice clearly say, "This country is here for the Mormons."¹⁷ Startled and fully awake, he felt he knew exactly what the words meant. He believed that the Lord was telling him the immediate vicinity held riches intended to benefit the Latter-day Saints.¹⁸

Soon after that, Jesse staked out a small mine that he called the June Bug. In 1890, he sold it for 14,000 dollars.¹⁹ Always generous, Jesse became even more open-handed with his newfound prosperity. He offered help to everyone who asked and often cosigned on loans for them. More often than not, Jesse was left to repay the debts. His money and credit quickly slipped away, and he even had to mortgage the home he had built for his family in Provo.²⁰ He painfully learned lessons about generosity, doles, and human nature.

Still believing the voice he had heard, Jesse was drawn back to Godiva Mountain. The areas he had previously prospected appeared to be all claimed. But he had a careful eye for geology and spotted some promising limestone outcrops. He asked a brother-in-law and expert miner, Jared Roundy, to evaluate the property and even offered him a partnership in the location. Jared declined, saying that he wasn't interested in an "old humbug like this."²¹ But Jesse was. He filed a claim and named it the Humbug.



© Utah State Historical Society

Jesse was in debt and had trouble securing a loan to work the mine, but he finally found financing and two men willing to work for him. He convinced his son Will to also work on the Humbug. One night while Will and his father were walking up the steep slope near the mine, Jesse turned to his son and said, "Will, I want to tell you something. We are going to have all the money that we want just as soon as we are in a position to handle it properly. We will someday save the credit of the Church."²²

Work on the Humbug tunnel began. The men worked in three shifts around the clock. For two months they continued with jackhammers and wheelbarrows, until one morning a worker came down the mountain with a piece of lead ore, saying he had hit a vein.

In the morning light of an August day in 1896, the men went back up to the tunnel. Will said Jesse was not very excited but rather matter of fact, having believed all along that the ore would be there. When Jesse brought out a wheelbarrow loaded with rich ore, he said, "I have done the last day's work that I ever expect to do where I take another man's job from him. I expect to give employment and make labor from now on for other people."²³

The vein struck in the Humbug mine was one of the richest lead-silver deposits ever found in the West. The second shipment of ore alone brought in more than 11,000 dollars, and within a short time the money was coming in rapidly.²⁴

He acquired other nearby properties and soon was known in the mining camps of Utah as the "Mormon Wizard" for his uncanny ability to know just where to turn a mine tunnel to strike ore.²⁵

Jesse had spent much of his early years in mining towns and knew their debilitating influence. He reasoned that the Saints would need a town where they could work and still live their religion. So he built a mining town all his own. Up on the hills above the town of Eureka, Jesse built Knightville, the only mining town in the West without a saloon. He had always been appalled that many miners drank away their earnings, leaving families destitute. He therefore hired workers only on condition that if a man was ever found drunk or neglecting his family, he would be fired.²⁶

It wasn't easy building a town outside of the tight monopoly of the local mine owners. Knightville was refused electrical power, coal, railroad lines, and water. So Jesse built power lines, water lines, a railroad line, and even dug a coal mine, all of which employed still more people.²⁷

Knightville grew steadily, and Jesse even built a school at his own expense and hired a teacher. The second year of the school, he looked into whether the county could send a teacher. When he discovered there were not enough children to receive school taxes, Jesse promptly went down the hill to Diamond Camp and hired Jim Higginson to work for him. The eight Higginson children enabled the school to receive county tax money.²⁸

Jesse was an unusual employer. Local mine operators usually charged arbitrary hospital and insurance fees and required workers to take an anti-polygamy vow. Jesse charged no fees and would not allow his superintendents to question a man about his politics or religion.²⁹ However, it was said that any returned missionary could get a job at the Knight mines. And true to Jesse's convictions, the Sabbath was strictly observed. Although other mines worked seven days a week, Jesse paid his men the same weekly wages for only six days and gave them Sunday off. While other mine owners jokingly referred to the Knight properties as the "Sunday School Mines," Jesse's miners affectionately called him "Uncle Jesse." The title followed him the rest of his life.³⁰

Ever concerned about his debt to the Lord, Jesse figured out what would have been his tithing for all those years when he was less active, added the compounded interest, and paid it to the Church.³¹

He also met his self-imposed obligation in other ways. Jesse's wealth came at a time when the Church was in great financial difficulty. At the October 1896 general conference, a special priesthood meeting was held, and one of the topics discussed was the Church's urgent need for a loan. President Woodruff reported some very pressing demands on the trustee-in-trust; the credit of the Church was at stake. Joseph B. Keeler, Jesse Knight's bishop, was at that meeting.

Bishop Keeler reported that he "went to the home of 'Uncle Jesse,' and found him in his parlor reading. After a few preliminary greetings, I rehearsed to him what . . . President Woodruff had said about the Church being financially embarrassed. But before I could ask him whether he would make the loan, he said instantly, 'Yes, I'll lend the Church \$10,000.'"³² Jesse made a similar loan, for the same sum, on at least one other occasion.³³

It was not just the Church institution that was financially strapped. The depression of 1893 had been hard on many workers and western communities. On January 1, 1901, Church President Lorenzo Snow asked "men and women of wealth"



See photo at nealfamilyhistory.blogspot.com.

to use their riches "to give employment to the laborer. . . . Unloose your purses, and embark in enterprises that will give work to the unemployed, and relieve the wretchedness that leads to . . . vice and crime."³⁴

Jesse responded by opening a cooperative store and revitalizing the Provo Woolen Mill. He opened banks and sugar factories and established farming communities. His son Ray, with his wife, Isabelle, headed for Alberta, Canada, to establish a cattle and sugar industry under Jesse's direction. That community is now called Raymond.³⁵ At one point when unemployment in the Provo area was high, Jesse built a road between Provo and Springville, complete with ornamental roadside plantings, just to provide jobs.³⁶

Perhaps Jesse's favorite beneficiary was Brigham Young University. Originally, the school was a small Church academy with limited financial means. As Provo residents, several Knight children received training from the Brigham Young Academy, and Jesse saw firsthand the school's needs. Over the years, Jesse gave the academy more than five hundred acres of land, bonds, cash, and trust funds. His generosity significantly contributed to the growth of the school into the university it is today.³⁷

Jesse was not only at the economic hub of the community but active in civic affairs as well. He

was a lifelong Democrat, and in 1908 his party asked him to run for governor. Jesse declined. He felt that he was too uneducated for the job.³⁸ Nonetheless, when William Jennings Bryan, the national Democratic candidate for president, came through Utah, he gave his speech from the steps of the Jesse Knight home on Center Street in Provo.³⁹

Interestingly, Jesse seemed to be in the middle of everything in Utah Valley except ecclesiastical leadership. Although he was a friend of the Church and of Church leaders, ward records show no evidence of Jesse ever holding any Church job other than that of ward teacher, the 1900 equivalent of a home teacher.⁴⁰ His sons Ray and Will served full-time missions for the Church. Jesse's daughter Inez and future daughter-in-law Jennie Brimhall were the Church's first single, full-time proselyting sister missionaries.⁴¹ His wife, Amanda, was always faithful in Church attendance and was involved in the family civic and business decisions as well.

Jesse was particularly fond of attending sacrament meeting. One young man in Jesse's ward reported that upon arrival at a meeting, Jesse always looked at how many deacons were available to pass the sacrament. If there were not enough,

he immediately went to the bishop and asked if he might assist.⁴²

Uncle Jesse's great heart was stilled on March 14, 1921. His funeral was attended by President Heber J. Grant and seven other General Authorities. In his funeral procession marched scores of civic and Church leaders, the BYU band, and streams of students and Utah Valley residents.⁴³

Some of the Knight wealth and enterprises lingered on after his death. But if Jesse had a flaw, it was that he gave as if there were no end. Even the richest of mining veins can be played out, and even great fortunes can be divided only a finite number of ways. He wasn't always financially careful or shrewd, and he knew it. Many of his investments lost money, but they always gave somebody a job with a fair employer. The financial devastation of the Great Depression eventually wiped out all that remained of the Knight family fortune. But the money had already accomplished the things Jesse believed it should.

He once stated, "The earth is the Lord's bank, and no man has a right to take money out of that bank and use it extravagantly upon himself."⁴⁴ His life bore out that belief. ▮

1 See William G. Hartley, *"They Are My Friends": A History of the Joseph Knight Family, 1825–1850* (Provo: Grandin Book Co., 1986), 17–49.
2 Ibid., 146–47.
3 Ibid., 155.
4 Ibid., 172–78.
5 Jesse William Knight, *The Jesse Knight Family: Jesse Knight, His Forebears and Family* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News Press, 1940), 22.
6 Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1904), 4:512.
7 Ibid.

8 *The Jesse Knight Family*, 25.
9 Ibid., 25–26.
10 *History of Utah*, 4:513.
11 *The Jesse Knight Family*, 31.
12 Ibid., 33.
13 Ibid., 34.
14 Ibid., 34–35.
15 Ibid., 35.
16 *History of Utah*, 4:513.
17 Ibid., 37.
18 Ibid.
19 Gary Fuller Reese, "Uncle Jesse: The Story of Jesse Knight, Miner, Industrialist, Philanthropist," master's thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, June 1961, 22.

20 *History of Utah*, 4:514.
21 *The Jesse Knight Family*, 37–39.
22 Ibid., 39.
23 Ibid., 40.
24 "Uncle Jesse," thesis, 25.
25 George A. Thompson, "The Mormon Wizard," *Frontier Times*, Apr.–May 1969, 27.
26 *History of Utah*, 4:514.
27 Fredrick M. Huchel, "Utah Valley's Visionary Prospector Who Found the Mother Lode," *Pioneer*, May–June 1991, 21.
28 Ibid.
29 *History of Utah*, 4:514.

30 "The Mormon Wizard," *Frontier Times*, 26–27.
31 Rodger Dean Duncan, "Wealth: A Means Not an End," *Instructor*, Sept. 1970, 329.
32 *The Jesse Knight Family*, 84.
33 Ibid., 87.
34 James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966–75), 3:334.
35 *The Jesse Knight Family*, 52–80.
36 "Utah Valley's Visionary Prospector," *Pioneer*, 21.
37 "Uncle Jesse," thesis, 36–53.
38 Ibid., 85.

39 Kris Radish, "Turn-of-the-century memories Sena can reach out and touch," *Deseret News*, 19 Oct. 1983, C1.
40 "Uncle Jesse," thesis, 87.
41 Alice Louise Reynolds, "Inez Knight Allen," *Relief Society Magazine*, July 1937, 403.
42 Joseph L. Wirthlin, "Jesse Knight—The Man and His Goodness," address given at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 20 May 1958, 6.
43 "Uncle Jesse," thesis, 82–83.
44 *History of Utah*, 4:514.

The First Single Sister Missionaries

by Diane L. Mangum

"In the evening we [with the elders] went on the street for meetings. Oldham is a large manufacturing city and on the Sat. night the streets were thronged with people. . . .



INEZ KNIGHT

"On a busy corner we formed a circle, sang a hymn, one offered a prayer then we sang again. A large crowd stopped to listen.



LUCY JANE BRIMHALL

*"The special meetings to be held next day were announced, and I recall a sickly feeling when Bro. McMurrin announced that 'real live Mormon women' would speak [the] next day." (Inez Knight, *Missionary Journal*, 1898–99, 16. Brigham Young University Archives, Provo, Utah)*

The "real live Mormon women" were Inez Knight and Lucy Jane (Jennie) Brimhall, the first single, official, proselyting sister missionaries in the Church, set apart in Provo, Utah, April 1, 1898.

The sisters did speak the next day to the people of Oldham in northwestern England. Historian Orson F. Whitney reports, "The hall was crowded, and their remarks were listened to with rapt attention. The novel spectacle of two young and innocent girls—whose



appearance alone betokened modesty and virtue, as their utterances showed intelligence and sincerity—declaring in words of soberness that Mormonism was divine, that it had made them what they were, and had sent them forth to bear witness of its truth, was a revelation to many" (*History of Utah*, 4 vols., Salt Lake City: Geo. Q. Cannon & Sons, 1904, 4:614).

The two Provo, Utah, friends had been planning an excursion to Europe. Both had completed studies at the Brigham Young Academy. Jennie, the daughter of Dr. George H. Brimhall (who was soon to be president of Brigham Young Academy, later Brigham Young University) and Alsina E. Wilkins Brimhall, was 23 and had recently quit teaching grammar school in southern Utah due to her poor health. Jennie was also engaged to Will Knight, Inez's missionary brother (see Inez Knight Allen,



Left: Heber C. Kimball Begins the Work at Preston England, by Richard Murray, © By Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

"Jennie Brimhall Knight," *Relief Society Magazine*, Dec. 1928, 645).

Inez was the daughter of local mining magnate Jesse Knight and Amanda McEwan Knight. She was 22 and had been deeply involved in family genealogical research in St. George, Utah. But when the call came to serve as proselyting missionaries to Great Britain, both accepted without reservation.

They left April 2, 1898, for Liverpool, England, with a group of other missionaries. They traveled by train for seven days to Philadelphia, where they boarded a ship, arriving in Liverpool on April 22.

Each of the 16 new missionaries was assigned a conference or area in which to labor, Sisters Knight and Brimhall being appointed to the Chilternham area. With other missionaries, including President McMurrin, the

sisters went to Oldham, in northwest England, where they encountered their first nonmember audiences. Street meetings were common, despite the noise of the workers' clogs on the stone-paved streets that "sounded like horses running wild in a band." After five street-corner meetings in one night, Inez wrote in her journal:

"Most of the Elders wear tall silk hats and good black clothes and as they stood like brave soldiers on the street that night, and different young men in all humility and yet with intelligence told the people Gospel truths, I was never prouder to know that I was numbered with the L.D. Saints" (*Missionary Journal*, 17–18).

The sisters then traveled to three conferences, often speaking in meetings, before proceeding about 150 miles southwest to their first permanent assignment in the city of Bristol. There they began tracting.

"Public speaking I knew would try me, but tracting I had an idea would be very easy," said Sister Knight. "My first day at that was in Bristol. At three houses they took my tract and spoke civilly to me, but at the fourth, a woman asked me who I was, and learning that I was a Latter-day Saint, she said, 'You don't know as much about them as I do, or you would not carry their trash around.' I told her I had lived among them all my life and ought to know. She then asked me if I knew Mary _____. I answered no. 'Well then you're a liar; you either did not come from Utah, or else you know her, because Mormon Elders took her out six years ago.' She followed me to each gate through the street, to inform them at each house who I was. Girl-like, I went home and cried" (Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:611).

The tracting statistics in Sister Knight's journal are not particularly complete, but it appears that in the month of August 1898 she distributed 523 tracts, visited 295 houses in tracting, visited 14 homes by invitation, had 22 gospel conversations, and distributed two books (see *Missionary Journal*, 174–75).

Her journal also notes that they often drew an "eager crowd" when they were speaking, though on occasion they were joined by a few local citizens more eager to disrupt than listen. The entry for Thursday, September

15, 1898, simply states, "Attended regular meeting in the evening. Much disturbance, had to call a policeman to clear the hall."

In November 1898 Sister Brimhall was honorably released from her mission to return home because of concern for her health. Sister Liza Chipman replaced her as the companion of Inez Knight. Sister Brimhall traveled home with a group of recently released missionaries, including Will Knight, whom she later married.

Some 30 years after her release as a missionary, a *Relief Society Magazine* article commented on the effectiveness of Jennie Brimhall's mission. "So effective was her testimony that after twenty years an unbeliever who listened to her speak wrote, saying he could never forget her sincere, guileless expression and was led further to investigate and receive the blessings of membership" ("Jennie Brimhall Knight," Dec. 1928, 646).

By January 1899 trouble was increasing for all the missionaries in Bristol. Stimulated by a group called the Anti-Mormon League, one night a crowd gathered outside the conference headquarters where Sisters Knight and Chipman were to meet a family for an appointment. As they arrived, the crowd shouted and hurled stones and trash. "The pelting continued until the street windows were badly broken." The mission president asked Elder Ray Knight to slip out the back door with the sisters and escort them to their apartment, a 45-minute walk away. However, they were discovered and the mob followed them through the streets.

"We escaped being hurt, save in our feelings, though our clothing was badly soiled and our hats were somewhat crumpled. The noise made by our pursuers drew people out of shops and buildings for some distance ahead of us, and as we at home stand to view a circus parade, so they watched us pass along, all save one man who accompanied us most of the way, endeavoring to protect us. About five minutes before we reached the police station we met Brothers James and Haddock, with three policemen, who at once stepped between us and the crowd, which, however, had so increased by this time that it was impossible to turn them back. Arriving at the station, we were at once hurried into a back room, and after waiting there about an hour (in which time some tears were shed and a Gospel

conversation held) the chief of police took us out of the rear entrance and saw us safe home" (Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:612).

One journal entry states: "We attended Priesthood meeting at which I was the only girl. I felt more conspicuous by the elders beginning their remarks; 'My brethren and sister.'"

Since these were the first sister missionaries, no set time had been established for their service. In March 1899, when European Mission President Lyman approached the sisters about their releases, Inez Knight had served 11 months and Liza Chipman 6 months. "Sister C. and I are both willing to remain until the Lord calls us home," Inez wrote (*Missionary Journal*, 141–42).

Inez Knight in fact continued her labors for another 14 months. She worked in London, in Ashford, Kent, and finally in North London. She sailed for home from Glasgow, Scotland, on May 19, 1900.

Following her mission, Inez returned to Provo to serve as matron, or Dean of Women, of the Brigham Young Academy for two years. In 1902 she married Robert Eugene Allen in the Salt Lake Temple. They had five sons. She later served as president of the Utah Stake Relief Society and also served on the General Board of the Relief Society. Active in civic and political affairs, Inez Knight Allen initiated the Community Welfare Department in Provo, was active in the Red Cross organization of Utah County, served as a Utah delegate to the National Democratic Convention in 1928, and was elected to the National Women's Democratic Committee that same year (see Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saints Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4:177).

Jennie Brimhall married J. William Knight in the Salt Lake Temple in January 1899. She then moved with her new husband to Canada, where they helped found the town of Raymond, Alberta. The mother of two sons, she presided over the Taylor Stake Young Ladies MIA in Canada for five years, and after her return to Provo, she served as the Utah Stake Young Ladies MIA president for eight years. From 1921 to 1928 Jennie B. Knight served as first counselor to the general president of the Relief Society, Clarissa S. Williams. She was also active in the Red Cross and the Utah Women's Council of Defense. In 1925 she attended the International Council of Women Conference in Washington, D.C. (see Jenson, 4:190). ▼



S.U.P. CONVENTION *in* Kanab, Utah

AUGUST 7—9, 2014

Headquarters at the Kanab Stake Center, 20 W. Center Street

Sponsored by *the Redrock Chapter of Sons of Utah Pioneers*

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President Stephen D. Nadauld, Dixie State University

Orderville Pageant:
"Land of Our Destiny"

Historic & Scenic Tours

Women's Saturday Program:
Talented fine artist, Julie Rogers.
See her work at julierogersart.com

Saturday Business Meeting:
Introduction of the National President-elect 2015 nominee and a new abbreviated election process.

"State of the S.U.P." by the National President and members of the Executive Council

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SONG OF ZION.

TUNE,—“*The old house at home.*”

Let them talk of this earth as a desert who will,
Yet, there 's freshness and blossom in parts of it still ;
Though its green spots are seared, and its sweets turned to
gall,

Yet, there 's still on its surface a good place for all.

Far away from vain strife

There's a land in the West,

Where our friends live the best,

'Tis the VALLEY of LIFE !

Then why should the tear-drop of care dim the eye,
When the day-star of hope points the place where to fly !

While the Ensign is raised, and Truth's messengers call,
Let us off to the Valley, there 's room in 't for all.

Far away, &c.

Let them look on this life as the last lot of man,
Who've no wish to improve all the good in 't they can !
Sure the blessings of Ephraim in fulness recall
That abundance of *wealth* 's *promised* Joseph for all.

Far away, &c.

Then let owls seek their holes who despise the bright day,
While “Like doves to our windows” we'll hasten away,
Sure there 's nothing in Bab'lon but mis'ry and thrall,
Then away to the West, for there 's room in 't for all !

Far away, &c.

*By John Lyon, The Harp of Zion: a Collection of Poems, Published for the Benefit
of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, Liverpool, 1853*